

Waldstatten's Brigade came likewise up from Skalitz. It was to re-establish the battle by turning the right flank of the enemy and attacking Wysokow from the hill to the north. This flank attack could succeed only in joint action with the three Brigades Hertwek, Jonak, and Rosenzweig against the weak hostile front from the line: Schonow—Prowodow, and the Skalitz highroad. The three brigades, were, however, unfit for such action or, at least, considered so. The two battalions of Waldstatten's Brigade, sent to the western end of the wood, could not re-establish the frontal attack of the three brigades, and brought about only a new failure, weakening the flank attack. The fact that three batteries of the corps artillery reserve were attached to Waldstatten's command, was of no advantage to the situation as a whole. Until then the powerful artillery reserve held the entire field under its fire. After it had been weakened by 24 guns, the Prussian artillery began to get the upper hand; stationed as it was between the wood and Wysokow as well as in Wenzelsberg, it could prepare an attack south of Wysokow for the execution of which the 20th Brigade, at least, had to be awaited.

Waldstatten reach the Wysokow plateau with 4 battalions, 4 squadrons, and 1 battery, soon reinforced by one and one half batteries. The rest of his artillery remained west or northwest of the village without going into action. The attack against the center of the long extended village took place first with two battalions. As the two and one half battalions, designated for the defense of the village, were extended along its entire length and as the terrain and buildings favored the attack, the Austrians succeeded in occupying a portion of the houses. This success was, however, of short duration. The occupied buildings, as well as the coming reinforcements were attacked not only in the front, but also on the left flank by two battalions of the 20th Brigade, led by General von Wittich, and on the right flank by the garrison of the western part of the village. The enemy, surrounded on three sides, retreated in confusion through the wood in rear of the railroad. The artillery which had suffered much from infantry fire was attacked, when about to drive off, by several squadrons of

General Wunck's Brigade, which came up under cover, and lost a few guns. The complete defeat of Waldstatten's Brigade decided Rammig to commence the retreat with the entire corps and to continue it to Skalitz, on receiving information that the enemy was marching from Kosteletz.

The victor limited himself to the occupation of the heights on either side of Wysokow. The troops were considered too exhausted and tired for pursuit, as if each victorious army were not exhausted and tired at the end of a victorious battle and as if, notwithstanding its condition, pursuit were not required as the only thing to make the victory complete.

The pursuit, desisted from, may be excused by the fact that the Prussian army had only two thirds of its strength at the end of the combat on hand and that these two thirds were entirely scattered. The responsibility for this unfavorable situation lies entirely at the door of the Prussian commander. The commanding general found himself at Nachod in a similar situation to that of Napoleon at Jena. However, he did not follow the example of the master who caused our greatest defeat. Here as well as there, a defile had to be traversed in order to give battle on the following day at the other end. Napoleon shunned no effort, no obstacle, no difficulty to bring over in the evening, in the night, sufficient troops to take a firm stand on the heights beyond the defile. Here as well as there, the enemy wore himself out by vain frontal attacks. Napoleon let him do so, did not waste his strength in the pursuit of small successes, did not divide his forces into numberless small detachments. The deployment of the hurriedly advancing troops had to be completed first. The enemy might fill in the time by slowly losing blood. He then went forward with a wide front and extended encircling wings in an annihilating attack against the enemy, tired, exhausted, and almost incapable of resistance. Pursuit came of itself. The needle gun and the firing tactics of the one, the shock tactics of the other at Nachod, had improved the condition of things to a certain degree. But a real victory had not been won.

The I Army Corps reached south of Landeshut as early as 25 June. After one day's rest, it was to continue

its march on the 27th and 28th via Trautenau to Arnau. Should it take the main road leading through Trautenau and Liebau, it would be sure to encounter resistance at the defile near Trautenau and to expose itself to defeat should the enemy be sufficiently strong. It was, consequently, advisable to go around Trautenau with at least part of the troops and to endeavor, at the same time, to take the enemy in flank. For this purpose the 1st Division and the reserve cavalry was to go via Freiheit to Pilsdorf, the 2d Division from Liebau with a brigade via Schatzlar, with the other via Bernsdorf to Trautenau. This march was completed by the 1st Division of the Guard which had received the order to march on the 27th, from Dittersbach via Weckelsdorf, Adersbach, Qualisch, and Parschnitz and thence to Eipel, also by the 2d Division of the Guard which was to advance from Kosteletz to Korika. Should the I Corps encounter the enemy at Trautenau, the latter would be attacked by the 2d Division in the front, by the 1st on the left and by the 1st Guard Division on the right flank. Should the enemy be farther south, the march would be continued, under cover of the reserve cavalry, in three columns—from Pilsdorf to Deutsch-Prausnitz, from Trautenau to Kaile, from Parschnitz to Eipel. Should one of the columns meet the enemy, the others would be ready to turn the threatened point. Should no enemy be found, the I Corps would take up position in echelon between Pilnika and Trautenau for the continuation of the march on the following day to Arnau, while the 1st Division of the Guard went with one brigade to Eipel—Raatsch, with the other, by the shorest road, to Koniginhof via Bausnitz to Alt-Rognitz. All this could be seen several days ahead and could have been arranged by giving proper march direction and cantonments on the 25th, or in case of need by a short march the afternoon of the 26th. However, the commanding general would have nothing to do with such combinations. He went with the 1st Division from Liebau and the 2d from Schomberg, that is, on two roads, but on two roads joining at Parschnitz, immediately at the defile of Trautenau. Bonin intended to advance from there in one column up the narrow valley of the Aupa, on the high southern edge of which the enemy was to be expected.

Map 46.

Chance brought it about that the 2d Division, contrary to the intention of the commanding general, reached Parschnitz much earlier than the 1st Division. It was thus obliged to take upon itself the role of advance guard, while it was intended to play the role of main body. The reconnaissance undertaken by it was limited to finding out that the bridge over the Aupa at Trautenau was occupied by a few dismounted dragoons. These were not driven back, the march through and beyond Trautenau was not continued and no steps were taken to find out whether more of the enemy was to be encountered beyond this handful of cavalry. The division commander, von Clausewitz, let the matter alone and did not receive the information that Mondel's Brigade had already reached the locality south of Trautenau as an advance guard of the X Austrian Corps and occupied the Hopfen and Kapellen hills. Bonin reached Parschnitz two hours later than Clausewitz. Upon learning that the bridge over the Aupa was occupied by the enemy, he sent the advance guard (1st Brigade) to drive the dragoons from the bridge over the Aupa and to continue the march via Trautenau to Pilnikau.

Hardly had the advance detachments left the town on the road to Pilnikau, when the troops which followed received a hot fire from the southern heights. The long marching column had only to turn left and close the ranks a little in order to be quickly ready for the attack of the front and flank of the hostile position. But the surprise, the lack of knowledge, the invisible enemy, the contradictory orders confused the five battalions. Considerable time elapsed before action was taken according to some kind of a plan. But the attack was difficult and no cover was at hand. The hostile skirmishers were well posted. Two battalions, one and a half squadrons, and two guns, marching as a right flank guard via Schatzlar and from Nieder-Altstadt via eastern Weigelsdorf against the left flank of the enemy, hurried to Trautenau, the focus of the combat, and increased there the confusion and the mass of troops not taking part in the battle.

We should think that the artillery would have effectively prepared, by fire, the attack against the heights. But it had not succeeded or at least it had not suffi-

ciently tried to bring the many batteries from the narrow road into a favorable position. An Austrian battery, placed in position at Hohenbruck, succeeded, on the other hand, in supporting the defense most effectively and in forcing the Prussians to evacuate the Galgenberg which they had ascended. The greatest losses were caused to the defense by the Jagers who sped their well aimed bullets from the upper stories and the roofs of the Trautenau houses. The Austrians might have held out a long time if eight battalions of the Prussian main body under General von Buddenbrock had not come up, partly crossing the Aupa, in the west and climbing through Parschnitz, partly through the Buddenbrock defile, partly over the roadless, steep, wooded, and rocky Parschnitz ridge in the direction of Hopfenberg—Katzauerberg. Two battalions of Mondel's Brigade were thrown against the enveloping troops. The other five evacuated the position in time. All fell back gradually. One regiment of the Prussian advance guard remained in Trautenau, the other followed slowly in order to first wait for the battalions of the main body, but later, at the signal of "Assembly" given in Trautenau, decided to retreat. Only a few companies, the commander of which did not wish to obey the signal of retreat in the face of the enemy, continued the advance. Thus, ten companies of the advance guard and the main body under Buddenbrock, reached Hohenbruck, sixteen gained the wooded heights between this village and Alt-Rognitz and nine, the flat area west of this point.

The exhausted troops could not advance further. On the heights commanding Neu-Rognitz, they met a strong artillery which the one Prussian battery, coming up under untold efforts, did not dare to attack. All that could be done was to hold the occupied positions until the mass of the corps, which had stayed behind, could come up and then to go on to victory. The movements, effected by von Buddenbruck's eight battalions toward Hohenbruck—Alt-Rognitz, were still under way when General von Hiller reported the arrival of the 1st Guard Division east of Parschnitz and offered to use these troops. Bonin declined the offer. He had deployed only eight battalions. The enemy

seemed to withdraw. Seventeen battalions, the entire cavalry and artillery were still at his disposition. Bonin did not lack troops, but he lacked the chance of making use of them. To throw twelve more battalions and four batteries into the narrow valley would not have been a support, but an added difficulty. Moreover, Hiller wanted to let his division rest for two hours east of Parschnitz. Consequently it remained there, for some time as a reserve.

Since the enemy seemed to have retreated via Hohenbruck, Bonin intended to draw his troops out of the defile and let the head advance as far as Pilnikau. The orders were being prepared when it was reported that the enemy was advancing from Neu-Rognitz. General von Grossmann was then instructed to support Buddenbrock with the advance guard, reinforced by three battalions from the main body. This could be executed only by bringing the ten available battalions from Trautenau in a westerly direction and then sending them to attack the enemy's left flank. The attack against the right flank fell, of itself, to the lot of the 1st Division of the Guard. It could not march down the narrow valley of the Aupa unconcerned, when the battle was raging on the heights on its immediate right flank. Hiller was forced to ascend the edge of the valley with all his troops or, at least with part of them, at Bausnitz, not for the purpose of forcing the refused support upon Bonin, but for his own security and in conformity with the most elementary rules of warfare. Should this take place, then the attack of the hostile right flank would result as a matter of course. The battle seemed to be best arranged as follows: Buddenbrock to halt at Hohenbruck—Alt-Rognitz, and even to retreat if necessary until Hiller should attack from the one side and Grossmann from the other with superior numbers. At all events Barnekow's Brigade, stationed at Wolta, ought to have crossed the Aupa below Trautenau and occupied the hills in the south as a reserve.

Only this one disposition was carried out. The order sent to General Grossmann never reached its destination, was never repeated, and was not replaced by the initiative of the advance guard commander. Ten battalions were kept out of the combat. General Hiller supposed he had no

other task than to march to Eipel and considered it an unwarranted intrusion to mix into the battle of another corps. That marching to the sound of cannon cannot be considered as a rule without exceptions, has been pointed out by criticism on this occasion. It might be so. But here the question was of marching away from the sound of cannonading and of a peaceful march along the edge of a battlefield. Both can hardly be justified. Buddenbrock's eight battalions were placed in a precarious situation by the defection of Grossmann and Hiller. The battalions and companies were completely mixed up by a march over mountains, wooded and very difficult terrain. The mounted officers had to leave their horses behind and, being on foot, could not overlook the terrain or control their troops by orders. One battery of the main body was the only artillery. Two more batteries went into position on the Kapellenberg later on. Of these, one was soon withdrawn, followed by the other after it had expended all the ammunition in its limbers. The eight battalions with no artillery whatever, were thus exposed, to the fire of at least 36 guns.

The situation seemed not favorable when Gablenz gave the order to Grivicic's Brigade, which had just arrived, to attack Alt-Rognitz, about the same time as Hiller started on his march from Parschnitz to Eipel. The attack, directed against the front of the nine Prussian companies west of Alt-Rognitz, by seven battalions formed into three echelons, took place as similar attacks at Nachod. The nine companies, however, retreated when the attack was renewed simultaneously with an attack against the extended left flank. This uncovered the left flank of the two other groups. The right wing in the lowlying Hohenbruck did not oppose any considerable resistance to the attack of Wimpffen's Brigade which followed shortly, and started to retreat as the center had done. It was continued by all the eight battalions without serious encounters as far as the Aupa and beyond it. The advance guard and main body were thus as good as eliminated. There remained the reserve—four and one half battalions under General von Barnekow. Of these, two battalions of the 43d Regiment were placed in position from the Galgenberg via Johan-

neskapelle and hill 504 to the edge of the wood at 457, while two and one half battalions of the 3d Grenadier Regiment were left west of Parschnitz to the right of the Aupa.

Wimpffen's Brigade marched against the position of the 43d. Its attack was repulsed. Hill 472 was taken during the pursuit and three more attacks were repulsed. Knebel's Brigade, arriving in support, would have suffered the fate of Wimpffen's Brigade if Grivicic's Brigade, advancing via Katzauerberg and Kriebnitz, had not threatened the flank and rear of the 43d and forced its retreat through the northern part of Kriebnitz, across the Aupa in the direction of Wolta. Grivicic now encountered the 3d Grenadiers, who had occupied hill 353, the wood north of Kriebnitz, and the slopes of the Parschnitz Berge and held their ground until Trautenau and the valley above Parschnitz had been evacuated by the Prussians, and the troops who held the Kommandeur Hill, had also begun to retreat. Then they began to withdraw through the Buddenbrock ravine and across the Aupa, where they joined the 1st Rifle Regiment. Thus the occupation of the principal position north of the river was of no value whatever. It had long since been prepared on the Kommandeur Hill. At least 24 of the guns, so painfully missed in front, were drawn up here. Three battalions and four squadrons, which could easily have been reinforced, were ready to defend this almost impregnable position. It seemed during the course of the day that the real battle would be waged at this point. It was impossible to foresee how the enemy could take this bulwark with exhausted troops. Still the last position was evacuated before the more advanced ones had been abandoned. Seemingly too exhausted to make a stand the troops streamed back as darkness set in, in order to reach the quarters left that morning, and that after a march of no less than eight miles.

The outlook for the I Corps the evening before, was as good as one could wish. If the enemy were at Trautenau or advanced thither, he exposed himself to annihilation as completely as could be desired, especially if the 1st and 2d Guard Divisions were not entirely held back. The advance via Liebau and Schomberg wrecked the advantages which

a lucky chance had placed in the hands of Bonin. Not through a ruse of the enemy but through his own deliberation he was led into a defile, whence it was difficult to withdraw. Unusually broken terrain increased the difficulties. All this could be overcome only by the stern purpose of defeating the enemy. Bonin would have been satisfied if he were not beaten. Such contentment with little was bad in the face of an enemy who was resolved to stop at no sacrifice to obtain victory. To defeat such an enemy every nerve must be strained and not small detachments sent out for attack. In the series of combats, constituting the battle of Trautenau, the troops were sent into the fray in dribblets. Three, at the most four, battalions fought around the Kappellenberg, and Hopfenberg. Only two were in a serious encounter at Hohenbruck and Alt-Rognitz. Two repulsed the attack of Wimpffen's Brigade. Two and one half held the position at Aupa. Out of the 96 guns only a few went into action for a short time. During the second part of the battle, positions were taken up which, though well defended, must sooner or later fall a prey to a surrounding movement, on account of their very narrow fronts. The only possible end of such a course of action was a general retreat. The commanding general could not or would not utilize his forces to obtain a victory; all that was left for him to do was to withdraw from the battlefield.

The results of the 27th appeared in no way to be unfavorable to Austria. At Trautenau, a decisive victory was won, at Nachod it must be admitted an attack had been repulsed, but the position of Skalitz on the possession of which Benedek had laid the greatest stress, had been held. The enemy had made no progress whatever on the Iser. Nevertheless the day had brought a great disillusionment. The shock tactics, on which Austria had built such hopes, had not verified in the least their expectations. Attacks by three times greater hostile forces were repulsed in a short time. The superiority of the needle gun had been proved beyond all refutation. Not only the vanquished of Nachod, but also the victor of Trautenau was discouraged. The losses were disproportionately great and so much the more felt as the efforts of the last ten days were quite exhausting.

Map 43.

The march had been made in one long column, first of one corps, then of four and finally of five, one behind the other. In order to reach the distant goal of the day, camp was broken early. A few hours later, the advance was hampered by the vehicles of the preceding corps. Forced halts alternated with short marches. The troops crawled on slowly to reach after dark the desired encampment, but found there scarcely any water or food. The marching demands were soon increased. Finally the march continued day and night with short halts for rest, little food and water, in the hope of soon reaching the battlefield and crushing the enemy with a weighty blow. Discouragement followed so much the greater upon the frustrated hope, as the latter had been so exalted. Rammig declared that his corps was incapable of either attack or defense. Even the victorious X Corps was in a depressed state.

Map 47.

The Austrian condition of affairs was not bad, however. Benedek had called the VIII Corps to Skalitz, the IV to Dolan. It would have been better to have placed these two corps not in rear of the VI, but the one on its right, the other on its left. Nevertheless, three Austrian Corps, stood near Skalitz the morning of the 28th. Opposite these, as already said, there stood only one Prussian Corps—the V. The VI was marching further east and it was doubtful if it would arrive on the 28th. There was no doubt that Austria would be numerically the stronger here. It is true that a new enemy had been reported at Eipel. But he could have been held in check by the X Corps for one day at least. Though no great feats could be expected from the VI Corps, it still could withstand an attack in the strong position at Skalitz left of the Aupa, at least until the VIII Corps could be brought up on the left and the IV on the right, according to Hannibal's and Napoleon's method, in order to encircle the flanks of the enemy, slowly losing his heart blood in attacks of the position. Should the Prussian Corps not attack, the three Austrian Corps would advance together in order to annihilate, by a deadly embrace, the enemy wherever he might have to stand in the end. Such victory would have brought decision on this front. It was, at least, to be hoped that, after the repulse

of the I and V Corps, the VI and the Guard Corps would likewise retreat. This would have been of little use if the First Army and Army of the Elbe, as ought to have been expected earlier, had advanced rapidly and attacked the pursuing enemy in the rear. But considering the operations of these two armies, no surprise or quick action could be expected from them. It seemed, on the contrary, not improbable that, should the 2d Army begin to retreat, the First Army and the Army of the Elbe would not cross the Iser. An attack on the 28th, against the Prussian V Corps with his three corps, offered a favorable prospect to Benedek. The Austrian army commander did not wish, however, to drop his former plan; defensive with two corps to the east, offensive with six corps to the west. He had no wish to take advantage of the victory won at Trautenau. He had drawn the VIII and IV Corps to Skalitz only in order to delay, under any circumstances, the enemy advancing with great force from Nachod.

When no attack was made during the forenoon of the 28th, two corps were more than enough for the defense. It is commendable that a commander does not easily abandon the plan decided upon, but it is still more laudable if he utilizes the lucky chance of the moment to strike a crushing blow. On the eastern front, the IV Corps was to remain at Dolan, the X to march to Deutsch-Prausnitz in order to get ahead of the Guard Corps, both to cross the Elbe on the following day. The VI and VIII Corps received orders to start, should no attack take place before 2:00 PM. A second order, issued at 11:00 AM, commanded their immediate departure. The VIII Corps had relieved the VI in the position near Skalitz. The latter was thus the first to march. When the VIII Corps was on the point of following, the enemy attacked. The corps had now to hold its position. After ten forced marches and the occupation of a position, it dared not turn back as soon as the enemy advanced and, moreover, it dared not pass through the one defile of Skalitz without apprehending a decisive defeat from the pursuing enemy.

The position on the heights of the left bank of the Aupa, north and south of Skalitz, was very strong, almost

impregnable in front, although the Eichwald and the Fasanerie offered a covered approach. Only a turning movement from the north on the right bank of the Aupa seemed dangerous. But this would be met, as might be expected, by the flanking movement of the IV Corps from Dolan.

The V Prussian Corps, reinforced by a brigade of the VI, stood, early on the 28th, in expectation of an attack, with the advance guard north, Hoffman's Brigade south, the main body and the right flank detachment under Loewenfeld east of Wysokow. In this position, Steinmetz wanted to await the support of the 2d Guard Division which he had asked, in order to attack with the advance guard the front, with the Guard and Loewenfeld, who had been sent to Studnitz, the left flank of the hostile position. Hoffmann was to remain in reserve and cover the left flank of the corps. Upon receiving information that the 2d Guard Division had to be utilized at another point, Steinmetz decided to attack even without this support. The advance guard was to advance south of Starkoc in a westerly direction, the main body to follow north of the Wysokow—Kleny road, then debouching to the left to support the attack, while Loewenfeld was to turn to the left toward the Schafberg and thence surround the left flank of the enemy, Hoffman, with the reserve, to act according to his own judgment. It was impossible to see how the intended envelopment of the well secured left flank could succeed. The whole affair ended in a frontal attack on a very strong position. It would have been more to the purpose to direct the principal attack against the left flank, advancing with two brigades on the right bank of the Aupa, with one brigade via Zlbow and the southern Zlitsch on the left bank, while one brigade went through the Eichwald and another one south of the railroad against the front.

Even the slimmest hope of success of a flanking attack was eliminated by the right flank detachment marching from the Schaferie not in a westerly direction, but via Dubno and through the Eichwald, by the advance via Starkoc taking the same road and by Hoffmann also going west, sending at least two of his battalions into the wood

and to the Fasanerie. Thus nine battalions streamed into this thicket while the remainder belonging to the detachments of Loewenfeld and Hoffmann, as well as to the advance guard, remained as reserves, partly outside the wood and partly occupied villages like Studnitz, the Schaferei, Starkoc, Dubno, and Kleny. It was impossible to tell how the jumbled up half-battalions, companies, and platoons were to be led in a joint attack out of the wood against the hostile position. The enemy, however, removed all difficulty. One of his battalions was sent into the oak wood. It was forced to retreat before the Prussian numerical superiority. General von Fragnern, commanding the left wing, sent one battalion for support and later led forward the remaining six of his brigade. Since the enemy could not be seen and could be recognized only by his fire, the brigade, turning slightly to the right from the north, reached the locality next to the wood—Gehege. Hostile detachments, which had come thither earlier, were repulsed. Further south, the brigade came upon the locality of the railway guard's house where it met two of Loewenfeld's half-battalions which had taken up a position behind the railroad embankment. To the rapid fire against the front was soon added rapid fire against the flank from the Tananerie and finally against the rear from the Gehege. After losing its commander and several officers, the brigade retreated partly to Skalitz, the lesser part going to its former position.

In order to pick up the remnants, Kreyssern's Brigade in position north of Skalitz, advanced against the railway track and the Gehege. Its fate was very similar to that of its predecessor. It streamed back to Skalitz also. There remained nothing for the corps commander, Archduke Leopold, but to order the retreat, which was started by Schulz's Brigade which stood untouched south of the town. The two other brigades followed under the protection of several battalions, posted near the railway, in the custom house, and in the railway depot, as well as of a strong artillery position east of the city. A few Prussian companies, which rushed against this position, met with a bloody repulse. A united, to a certain degree orderly, pursuit by the mixed up

leaderless troops in the wood could not be thought of, therefore the retreat could be started in fairly good order. The Prussian main forces had deployed west of Wysokow in the meanwhile. General von Kirchbach recognized that the directed "debouching" to the left would bring about a hopeless attack over an open field against the Austrian artillery position. He preferred, after leaving one regiment at Starkoc, to advance with the right wing, via Zilbow, and with the left through the Eichwald. The right wing, advancing southward from the north, gradually drove back the few troops still in position. The left wing, which was joined by the troops in the wood, arrived, after crossing the railway line, under a most effective fire of the hostile artillery, against which only a few batteries had been directed. The Austrian rear guard, however, was forced to retreat when battalions of the Prussian right wing penetrated into the town near the Aupa, while some even crossed the river and threatened Klein-Skalitz. The pursuit was scarcely extended across the Aupa. Steinmetz was satisfied with the occupation of the heights on the left bank.

Map 43.

It might have been expected from Gablenz that he would take advantage of the victory of the 27th and 28th. But should he follow the defeated opponent, the enemy, reported at Eipel, would attack him in the rear. Should he advance against the latter, he would have to take into account the advancing troops of Bonin and new ones coming up from the south. A continuation of the offensive movement in the one or the other direction was fraught with risk which could be undertaken and was advisable only for a general who, like Napoleon, knew himself to be master of the battlefield. The victor of Trautenau, who had tested the superiority of the enemy's arms, could not have this consciousness. Even did he possess it, it would have been impossible for him to continue the offensive, if it were not joined in simultaneously from Skalitz. For the retreat, which Gablenz had to start, the surest road would have been via Kottwitz. Thence he could have barred the enemy in time at Koniginhof on the right or left bank of the Elbe. But in that case he would have left the road to Skalitz open to the Guard Corps for the annihilation of the detachment probably fighting at that

Map 48.

point. The order of the commander to go back to Deutsch-Prausnitz and to halt there, was consequently justified. The mode of execution, however, must be considered.

The trains and ammunition park were to march first to Rettendorf, then Knebel's Brigade was to occupy the heights at Burkersdorf, Wimpffen's Brigade to advance to the heights of Kaile, Mondel's Brigade as rear guard, follow at the proper distance, lastly Grivicic's Brigade to advance from the Katzauerberg via Alt-Rognitz and Rudersdorf as far as Raatsch in order to occupy there a position as advance guard facing Eipel. As the army order was received at 7:30 AM, and the trains could start only later, the orders could be executed only if the enemy halted at Eipel. The wish to do so existed at least. On receiving the false report that hostile columns were advancing from Deutsch-Prausnitz to Trautenau, the 1st Guard Division wanted to await the cooperation of the I Corps in a position behind the Aupa. Correct reports that the enemy was marching in an opposite direction decided the commanding general to give the 1st Guard Division orders to advance via Staudenz. This advance could have been supported effectively if on the day before the 2d Division of the Guard, instead of halting at Kosteletz, had gone to Horicka and had advanced to Kaile in time on the 28th. To make a detour, via Horicka, at the time was not considered advisable. Another road via Liebenthal was found impracticable. The 2d Guard Division was thus condemned to follow the first and play a secondary role. When the advance guard of the 1st Guard Division came in touch with Staudenz, Gablenz ordered the trains, which had not yet passed Burkersdorf, to turn to Pilnikau and Knebel's Brigade as well as a few batteries of the artillery reserve to deploy between Neu-Rognitz and Burkersdorf.

The deployed Prussian advance guard went against this position, drove off a far advanced battalion, but halted after this in order to await the main body which had remained behind. When the latter came on a line with the advance guard, Mondel's Brigade had also reached Neu-Rognitz. Thus two almost equally strong forces opposed each other and the Austrian troops had no reason to avoid a combat. But

the false report that the Prussians had penetrated into Kaile (thus executing what the 2d Guard Division ought to have done) induced Gablenz to start the retreat—Wimpffen's Brigade from Hohenbruck, and Mondel's Brigade from Neu-Rognitz to Pilnikau under cover of Knebel's Brigade. The latter had to withstand an attack of the 1st Guard Division before it could follow the two others. It suffered quite considerable losses. The Prussians would have achieved a real success only if they had pursued the enemy as far as the road to Pilnikau. But the commander as well as the troops were kept back from such an operation by firmly rooted maneuver considerations. The enemy was retreating. The signal "Halt all!" was given. Even under serious war conditions these peace customs were maintained, although all manuals taught that pursuit in war was one of the principal operations.

Long before the question arose as to whether or not pursuit should take place, Grivicic's Brigade, according to orders received, had reached Alt-Rognitz. One battalion of the 2d Guard Division, following the 1st Division via Raatsch, was directed against the enemy appearing on the flank. It fought a very bloody battle south of Rudersdorf near the Stein Krenz. A second battalion brought the combat to a standstill. A pause took place in the fighting. Grivicic hesitated to advance and awaited the order to retreat, which the other brigades had already received. The two Prussian battalions were too weak to attack. The commanding general did not deem it necessary to support them. The commander-in-chief held the opinion, "we will see them (Grivicic's Brigade) all captives this evening at Trautenau and all the more surely, if we have greater success at the front." This was quite right. But success at the front must first be achieved by advancing as far as the Pilnikau road. It could not be obtained by a bivouack at Burkersdorf. The commanding general was at last prevailed upon to send eight companies forward to Alt-Rognitz. This flanking attack forced the Austrian brigades to retreat. After the wounding of their leader, the cohesion of the troops was lost. A few severe encounters between separate detachments still took place. Then the Austrians endeavored to reach the

road to Pilnikau via Neu-Rognitz, Hohenbruck, and Trautenau. They fell mostly into the hands of the main body of the 2d Guard Division advancing on Trautenau. This success over a brigade shows what advantages could have been attained over the entire corps if the 2d Guard Division had been directed at once to Kaile and if both divisions had advanced, without loss of time, by the Trautenau—Prausnitz road up to the Trautenau—Pilnikau road.

The following troops of the First Army and of the Army of the Elbe were to advance on the 28th for the attack of the position at Munchengratz: the 15th and 16th Divisions from Huhnerwasser to Munchengratz, the 14th via Liebitch to Mohelnitz, the Landwehr Division of the Guard to Huhnerwasser, Horn's Division (8th) and that of Manstein (6th) from Podol to Brezina, Fransecky (7th) from Mockry—Wschen to Zider, the Cavalry Corps with three brigades to Dauby and Lozan, the II Corps to Sichrow, the rest of the Cavalry Corps to Liebenau—Reichenau, and Tumpling's Division (5th) to Rowensko. Without awaiting this attack the Crown Prince of Saxony ordered a retreat as follows: Ringelsheim's Brigade via Podkost, Poschacher's, Pirte's, and Abele's Brigades via Furstenbruck and Sobotka to Gitschin, the Saxon Corps via Trentsin, Nasilnitsch, and Brezno to Domausnitz, the Saxon cavalry to Unter-Bautzen, the Saxon heavy artillery and the trains to Jungbunzlau and east thereof. Since the Army of the Elbe had to cover considerable distances and the attack therefore could not begin until 9:00 AM, the Austrians and Saxons could have withdrawn without any loss if Leiningen's Brigade, left as rear guard near Kloster, the other side of the Iser, had not awaited the attack of the 15th Division and if two horse batteries and some infantry had not been placed on the Musky Hill north of Musky to receive that brigade.

Map 49.

Hence ensued combats between Leiningen's Brigade and the advance guards of the 15th and 14th Divisions, as well as between Fransecky's Division and the troops posted on the Musky hill. After some not inconsiderable losses and the capture of prisoners from the Italian reserves, the Austrians retreated on Abele's Brigade via Furstenbruck. On the Prussian side almost all their forces had been concentrated

in the narrow space of the battlefield. Only the Landwehr Division of the Guard had remained at Huhnerwasser, Alvensleben's Division of the Cavalry Corps at Liebenau-Langenbruck and Tumpling's Division at Rowensko. The mass, consisting of one cavalry and eight infantry divisions, about 120,000 men, was united immediately under the eye of its commander, but suffered under "the calamity of concentration," lacked the most needful things, and could be employed only with difficulty.

Although there was no pursuit, army headquarters was well informed by the cavalry as to the location of the enemy. The march of a long column from Sobotka to Gitschin had been observed, strong Austrian cavalry had been found near this town as well as a rear guard near Podkost in the evening. It was not difficult to guess where the Austrian corps would be in the evening. Reports concerning the Saxons were less satisfactory. The patrols had met outposts not far from Jungbunzlau. Nothing, however, had been observed of a departure from Bakow to Unter-Bautzen. Army headquarters deduced from all this that, if not the entire hostile army, then at least the Saxon Corps had taken up again a position at Jungbunzlau and would have to be attacked there. For this purpose, in the afternoon of the 29th, the following should be in readiness: the 15th Division on the right and the 16th on the left bank of the Iser near Bakow, the 14th and the Landwehr Division of the Guard in their rear at Munchengratz. The II Corps was to march from Dambrow via Zehrow to Martinowitz by the road Jungbunzlau—Ober Bautzen, Tumpling's Division to Sobotka, the remaining troop units to remain where they were. On the 30th the attack was to take place against an unoccupied position.

Benedek's situation thanks to the victory at Trautenau, and in spite of the unfortunate combats of Nachod, Skalit, and Burkersdorf, was not very unfavorable on the evening of the 28th. The IV and X Corps were undoubtedly capable of preventing the Prussian Second Army from crossing the Upper Elbe for two, even three days. Although the VI and VIII Corps of the six remaining ones had suffered considerably, there were still sufficient forces available for an offensive against the Prussian First Army with good pros-

pect of success, as it could not deploy in full force in any direction. It was the highest time that action be taken. The encounter in which, on the Prussian side, the Army of the Elbe and probably more troops would have been lacking, had to take place on the 30th at the latest. An annihilating victory was by all means necessary to the Austrians. A simple retreat of the enemy or an undecided battle would have brought from the one side the Second Army, from the other the Army of the Elbe and a doubtful victory would have been transformed into a sure defeat. However, it was problematic if the Austrian army leadership was capable of fighting a battle of annihilation, taking into consideration the proofs given so far. There was no inclination to make that attempt. The unfortunate messages from Skalitz and Burkersdorf, as well as the false report that the enemy had penetrated into Gitschin, affected Benedek's confidence in himself and his troops so deeply that he abandoned the intended offensive and wanted to seek salvation in the position—Josefstadt (II), Jaromer (IV), Salm (VIII), Lititzsch (X), Lancow (VI), Miletin (III), Horitz (I), Milowitz (Saxon Corps). Benedek gave up the possibility of a victory by adopting this decision. The naturally strong position: Josefstadt—Miletin, was so strongly occupied by six corps that the Prussian Second Army had little chances of taking it soon. But so much the weaker was the flank in the locality: Horitz—Milowitz, facing west, for the defense of which against the First Army and Army of the Elbe, the I and the Saxon Corps were not sufficient. The narrow flank had to be pushed back against the Elbe by the much wider Prussian armies, while the cavalry corps crossed the Elbe below this point, Hartmann's Cavalry Division crossing the Mettau in order to complete the impending "Cannae" by the occupation of the fords between Koniggratz and Josefstadt.

The question was not:—will the Austrians be thrown back, as was the highest aim of army headquarters, but will they be surrounded on the left bank of the Elbe, as Moltke had wished. In other words, shall the campaign be continued step by step, i.e., from the Elbe and the Main to the Danube and, maybe, across the Danube; will the powers, on-

Map 44.

lookers at present, join the fray from right and left, or shall Prussia's war against Austria, against the German Central States and, as she would have to show her hand, against France, be ended like the war of Italy against Austria, in one day and on one battlefield? What the Second Army could do for the solution of these questions had already taken place, or might be made up for in the next few days. The most essential thing to be done, however, fell to the lot of the two other armies. Had these started originally in five columns, without caring about the enemies, who either did not exist or were too weak for serious resistance, they might have reached Jungbunzlau—Eisenbrod on the 27th, at the latest on the 29th, could have reached Gitschin with the left wing, and Neubidschow or Chlumec with the right as actually happened. After this a short pressure only was necessary to put into execution Moltke's plan on the 30th. This could no longer be done since the 28th had been spent in a "Sham Battle" in which "everything had worked well together," and could no more be thought of when on the 29th a storming of Jungbunzlau had been prepared, to be executed only on the 30th. It was high time that Moltke should urge early on the 29th, by a telegram that the great aim could be partially attained. The Second Army needed no other instructions. It wanted to proceed on the 29th with the I Corps to Pilnikau, the Guard Corps of Rettendorf, the advance guard to Koniginhof, with the V Corps to Gradlitz, the VI Corps to Skalitz. This intention led to new combats.

Map 49.

General von Steinmetz at Skalitz had opposite him on the road from Josefstadt to the Walowski valley the outposts of the Austrian IV Corps. He did not want to let this enemy "lure him to Jaromer," but planned to turn his left wing by marching off via Westetz, Wetrnik, and Chwalkowitz without having much to do with him. But when the advance guard ascended the plateau southwest of Wetrnik between Chwalkowitz and Miskoles, it encountered the enemy who had occupied an advantageous position near Schweinschadel and Sebuc between the Aupa and Schwarzwasser. The march could not be continued unless it were expected that the flank or rear should be exposed to attack. The advance guard jointly with a left flank detachment which had

Map 50.

marched up from Trebeschow by the Walowski valley, formed for attack on the height of Miskoles. Count Fesetics, the Austrian commander, had received instructions to avoid combat with superior forces. However, "not to demoralize his troops by an early retreat," he wanted to repulse the first onset of the enemy and then only start the retreat. A combat took place with the usual Austrian counter thrusts of individual troop units, repulses of such attacks by rapid fire, around Schweinschadel, the thicket near the Schaferei and the Ziegelei and near Sobuc, finally a breaking off of the fight on the part of the Prussians and a retreat to Jaromer on the part of the Austrians. Since the fight began in the afternoon, the first troops of the V Corps reached Gradlitz only in the night.

The X Corps and Fleischhacker's Brigade of the Austrian IV Corps were to march on the 29th from Neuschloss via Koniginhof to Dubenetz. Wimpffen's Brigade alone was sent over the nearest and best, but also the most threatened road via Ketzelsdorf. It reached Koniginhof without having come into touch with the enemy and continued its march to Dubenetz. The remaining brigades, the artillery reserve, the ammunition park and the trains had to make a detour on the right bank of the Elbe, cross the river immediately in front of Koniginhof and thence return to the right bank. To cover the march through the town, ten companies of the Coronini regiment were sent to the eastern exit, three of them occupying the brick kiln. The trains, the ammunition park, the artillery reserve and Knebel's Brigade had crossed the southern bridge, two battalions (the remnants of Grivicic's Brigade) rested on the market place when the advance guard of the Guard Corps appeared at 2:00 PM, from Burkersdorf. The three companies in the brick kiln were reinforced by three companies of the reserve. The six companies could not long resist the two batteries and two and one half battalions of the advance guard. They found, on retreating, the northern bridge barred by a Prussian company. The two Grivicic battalions, two battalions of Mondel's Brigade covered by the ten Coronini companies, were forced to retreat over the southern bridge after street fighting and serious losses in casualties and prisoners. The

Map 49.

Mondel battalions, which had remained behind, as well as Fleischhacker's Brigade marched obliquely over the field to opposite the railway depot where a numerous artillery had arrived and checked all pursuit over the Elbe.

In the evening of the 29th, the left bank of the Elbe above Jaromer was evacuated by the Austrians and won by the Prussians. Of these there stood the Guard and the V Corps with Hoffman's Brigade near Rettendorf, Koniginhof, and Grادلitz, the I Corps near Pilnikau, the VI near Skalitz, the Cavalry Division near Kaile. On the other bank, in a very strong position formed by the edge of the valley of the Elbe between Kaschow and Doubrawitz, stood the VI, VIII, and X Corps, the 2d and 3d Reserve Cavalry Divisions in readiness. The right flank between Jaromer and Kaschow was covered by the II and IV Corps, the 1st Reserve and the 2d Light Cavalry Divisions while the left was covered by the III Corps in the region: Miletin—Zabres—Zdobin—Chrostow—Tetin. The Second Army did not deem it possible to attack this numerically superior army in so strong a position. An attack by the Austrians, on the contrary, seemed to have a good chance. In their hands were several crossings above and below over which they could make a flank attack against the concentrated Prussian position. But since four of his corps had been defeated with severe losses, Benedek abandoned all thought of attack. All his hopes lay in repulsing an attack against the long known and celebrated position. In order to be as strong as possible for this combat, an order had been prepared early on the 29th for the Crown Prince of Saxony to effect a junction with the main army without becoming engaged in any obstinate combats. The defensive battle against the Second Army was to take place before the First Army and the Army of the Elbe should have time to come up. The Second Army, however, had not given its consent to this plan. It did not wish to attack, but to rest on the 30th.

The Austrian and the Second Armies both decided to wait. It was so much the more urgent to call the First Army. It was, however, impossible to advance rapidly against the enemy out of the "calamity of concentration" in the direction of Horitz—Koniggratz and strike at his flank and rear. The

divisions could be taken only one by one out of the thick mass formation. It was also impossible to leave Jungbunzlau out of consideration. Orders were, consequently given: Under General von Schmidt, commanding the II Corps, will march: Tumpling's Division (5th) from Rowensko, Werder (3d Division) from Zehrow to Gitschin, Herwarth (4th Division) from Zidar and Alvensleben's Cavalry Division will follow the former, Fransecky (7th Division) from Bosin via Sobotka, following the latter. After these divisions there should start in the evening, Horn (8th Division), Manstein (6th Division), and Hann's Cavalry Division to Lower and Upper Bautzen to serve as a reserve for the divisions marching to Gitschin as well as for the Army of the Elbe remaining opposite Jungbunzlau. Not in spite of but because the commanders always endeavored to keep all their forces firmly and resolutely together, they could send against the enemy only two divisions instead of ten. The two divisions of Herwarth and Fransecky, following in second line were at too great a distance from Tumpling and Werder to be able to take part in a combat on the same day. And yet a decision had to be reached on that very day.

Poschacher's Brigade and Edelsheim's Cavalry Division had reached Gitschin already on the 28th. Piret's, Leiningen's, and Abele's Brigades followed to that point in the afternoon of the next day. Ringelsheim's Brigade reached Lochow, Stieglitz's Saxon Division reached Podhrad, while Schimpff's Division arrived at Gitschinowes only towards evening. Through these marches the intention, given in the army order of the 28th, "to prevent the enemy from penetrating between the main forces and your troops," seemed to have been fulfilled. By another report "Army Headquarters at Miletin on the 29th, at Gitschin on the 30th," the prompt advance of the army seemed to be in view. The Crown Prince decided, consequently, to remain at Gitschin. The enemy had not followed. Only Tumpling's Division stood since the evening before, near Rowensko. In order to secure the position against these, Count Clam-Gallas had the Brada-berg occupied by Poschacher and Markt-Eisenstadt by Piret, placing Leiningen as a reserve in rear of Poschacher, and begged the Crown Prince to send a brigade to Dieletzt,

Map 51.

followed by another as a reserve. Since no attack seemed imminent, Stieglitz's Division remained at Wokschitz and Podhrad. Abele's Division occupied the lowland steep near Prachow. The position, divided into two parts by the ridge of Priwisin, was unfortunately chosen. Should one of the defenders retreat, the victorious attack came upon the rear of the other defender. If both parts advanced, they would be entirely separated. It was also unfortunate that Dieletzt and Markt-Eisenstadtl were situated in a lowland and were occupied, according to ancient custom, only because they were villages.

Unexpectedly came the report at 3:30 PM, that the enemy was advancing on the Turnau road. The western edge of Markt-Eisenstadtl, the northern edge of South Podulsch and the edge of the wood south of Klein-Ginolitz, were now occupied. Stieglitz's Division was called up, the place designated for it being occupied temporarily by the Cavalry Brigade of Wallis north of Dieletzt, the artillery east of Brada. The enemy came partly from Ober-Knischnitz along the main road and partly via Cidlina to Zames. Thence he forced Wallis' Hussars, who had ascended on foot and occupied hill 324 west of Zames, as well as the two right wing batteries between Brada and Dieletzt, to retreat. West of Zames the enemy occupied the northern Podulsch, Ginolitz, and the hill south of Jawornitz and advanced via Bresca to Prachow. The enemy halted on the edge of the wood and at southern Podulsch and marched against Dieletzt. Two skirmish lines had already penetrated into the village when the Saxon Brigade came up and won back what had been lost. The Prussian artillery, which had come in a southern and southwestern direction from Ober Knischnitz, advanced west as far as Zames and forced part of the Austrian and Saxon batteries to go from east of Brada to north of Kobelnitz. Such was the situation when at 7:00 PM Benedek issued the order to continue the movement for the junction with the army, avoiding the more serious encounters. In spite of that the Crown Prince would have maintained his position until dark if Ringelsheim had not sent the exaggerated report that he had been attacked with forces four times superior to his.

Retreat was ordered. Piret was to hold Markt-Eisenstadt, Stieglitz was to go to Zebimberg, Leiningen and Poschacher to Gitschin. The Saxons were on the point of evacuating Dieletz when a general, encircling attack was made on this village. Part of the still fighting defenders were cut off. Piret wanted to tear from the enemy the advantages obtained and crossed the Cidlina back at the Walchamill with three battalions each against the northern exit of Dieletz and against Zames. The attack in column formation, executed with band playing, broke at both points against a scathing rapid fire. After losing one sixth of its strength, the brigade abandoned Markt-Eisenstadt and went back to Gitschin. Poschacher had also undertaken a successful attack against Klein-Ginolitz with a few battalions shortly before retreating. The retreat through the wood and out of the villages was rendered more difficult by this success. Several companies were cut off when Tumpling took Podulsch and Brada by an encircling attack at 8:30 PM. The wounding of the General brought the advance to a standstill. Before General Kaminsky had taken over the command at 10:00 PM, and ordered the continuation of the advance, Piret, Stieglitz, and Wallis had departed to the east and Leiningen, Poschacher and the mass of the artillery and cavalry through Gitschin.

Ringelsheim's Brigade had taken up position west of Wohawetz, that of Abele north of Prachow. Detachments had been sent forward to Lower and Upper Lochow, also on the road and into the wood toward Bresca. Werder marched against these positions from Sobotka. The advanced detachments of the enemy were driven back by his advance guard, Lower Lochow, the wood to its north and St. Annenkapelle were taken. Upper Lochow, however, was strongly garrisoned, the meadow strip east of Lower Lochow was hard to cross and the Austrian artillery on height 330 was very effective. General Janushevsky was entrusted with turning the difficult position via Wostruschno with four battalions and one battery. The goal had not yet been reached when the Austrians made a counterattack from Upper Lochow with two, and from Wohawetz with four bat-

talions, while three battalions occupied the southern edge of hill 295. The attack on Upper Lochow succeeded. Two companies were forced to evacuate the wood north of Lower Lochow. The attack from Wohawetz was repulsed, however, by the rapid fire of the Prussian infantry which had come up in the meanwhile over the meadow strip east of Lower Lochow. The order to retreat arrived at this junction and was executed without much disturbance as two roads, via Holin and Wohawetz, were available and no pursuit took place. Only the flank detachment near Prachow was pushed back in part.

As there was not sufficient water at Wohawetz, General Schmidt decided to march further, although darkness had already set in. He rode at the head of the troops with his staff before the infantry could follow. Close to Gitschin he was met by fire. A battalion which followed him, found one of the gates unoccupied and entered the town. Ringelsheim's Brigade, designated in the beginning as rear guard for holding the town, was no longer in a condition to execute this task, and had retreated through the streets. A Saxon Brigade, called as a substitute, arrived almost at the same time, (10:30 PM), from the northeast as the Prussian battalion came up from the west into the town. The battalion had to go back. Another attempt to penetrate into the town was repulsed. The Saxons occupied the town. Werder's Division went into bivouac west of and close to the town. Shortly before midnight the advance guard battalion of the 5th Division arrived in front of the town. Its attack was likewise repulsed. The Saxon Brigade evacuated the town and retreated to Smidar, only when Lieutenant Colonel von Gaudy advanced with three and one half battalions from Dieletz east of Kbelnitz, crossing the Cidlina and coming up from the north. Gitschin was then occupied by the Prussians.

Desisting from the time honored procedure, pursuits were undertaken on that day. The effect was not slow to show itself. Count Clam-Gallas in Gitschin was on the point of giving orders for further retreat when the foremost Prussians penetrated into the town. He was forced to ride

away in a hurry. The orders could not be carried out. His troops, partly also the Saxons, mixed up together, found themselves on the following morning far dispersed between Miletin, Horitz, Smidar, Neubischow, and even Josefstadt.

First Army Headquarters demanded after this several days of rest, later on the reserves were drawn from Upper and Lower Bautzen to Gitschin and, after the destruction of the phantom of Jungbunzlau, the Army of the Elbe was brought to Liban. Thus the First Army was assembled at Gitschin. The pursuit was begun from there in the afternoon in the direction of Miletin: by Manstein (6th Division) as far as Chotez, Tumbling (5th) as far as Quilbitz; in the direction of Horitz: by Fransecky (7th) as far as Konetschlum in the direction of Smidar: by Horn (8th) as far as Miletin. The II Corps remained at Gitschin and Podhrad. The Cavalry Corps, which had asked permission to go in pursuit of the enemy, was refused its request presented at an inopportune moment, and sent to Dvoretz and Robus. How much would it not have been able to do when the appearance alone of a cavalry regiment before Horitz decided Clam-Gallas to continue his retreat from Horitz to Sadowa, from Miletin via Gross-Burglitz and Maslowed to Koniggratz. The left flank of the Austrian army was now entirely uncovered. An insignificant cannonade took place on the Elbe, but on the morrow an attack must follow against the front and, via Horitz and Miletin, against the rear. The result of this could not be awaited. At dark the retreat was begun in silence: by the III and X Corps via Lancow, Gross-Burglitz, Cerekwitz, Sadowa, to Lipa; by the V Corps via Dubenetz, Choteborek, Zizelowes, Horenowes, to Wiestar; by the VI Corps via Dubunetz, Choteborek, Welchow, Ratschitz, Sendrasitz, to Nedelitz; by the II Corps via Salnai and Jezbin to Trotina; the Saxon Corps in Smidar was asked to join via Neubidschow and Nechanitz.

This was a success, but not the success Moltke had intended it to be, as he had thought it out. His plan of operations was simple enough. He let the widely scattered armies march to the point to which, according to his calculations, the Austrians must decide to go. To friend and enemy the same rendezvous had been assigned. From Saxony,

from the Lausitz and Silesia, as well as from Moravia, the Prussians and the Austrians were to stream to the locality between the Elbe and the Iser, the former for the purpose of unitedly fighting two separated enemies, the latter for the purpose of fighting the united enemy from two different sides, the former to take advantage of the interior, the latter of the outer lines. By exerting their utmost efforts, the Austrians were the first to come to the rendezvous. The length of their marching columns extended their advance over five days. Five long days must they wait before the intended offensive could be undertaken against the hostile main army advancing against the Iser. Was it not possible for this main army, which was to be attacked, to make an attack before the end of this period, and was it not possible that the Silesian army, which had arrived as far as the mountain passes, might appear earlier on the upper Elbe? The Austrian army would then have been forced, before or possibly immediately after the completed concentration, to struggle with the Prussian army in the vicinity of Miletin for the decision, while, close by, two corps had already begun to ward off attacks against flank and rear. The position on the upper Elbe was strong. But sooner or later its left wing must be turned. Then the flood would break over the left flank and rear of the Austrian army. No matter how many attacks might have been repulsed, had the enemy not been annihilated, the Austrian army faced destruction.

Such a situation must be avoided, the two hostile armies must be kept farther apart. The Crown Prince of Saxony received the order to prevent the enemy at any cost from crossing the Iser. Gablenz was sent to Trautenau and Rammig to Skalitz and Nachod to hold back the two corps, expected from Silesia, near the exits of the mountain passes. Both measures were inadequate, considering the two forces opposing each other. Nevertheless, they were not unsuccessful. The enemy was not held back at the Iser, it is true, but he stopped of his own accord. Gablenz threw his opponent out of the field. Rammig, at least, maintained his position at Skalitz, and was reinforced by two corps. The

situation was entirely changed. The Austrians were in superior numbers on the eastern front. Four corps opposed two, three opposed one. They had only to attack. No surprise was to be expected on the western front for several days. Benedek, however, did not utilize the advantage which was already in his hands. He wanted to abide by his old plan and leave two corps at the Upper Elbe while preparing with the remaining forces at his disposition for an offensive on the Iser. He thus jeopardized all hope of success. Four corps might have achieved a great success on the eastern front on the 28th. Two corps were not sufficient to ward off a defeat, which they would have suffered as early as the 27th without the great mistakes made by Bonin and Hiller. The Prussians had advanced in four columns. The Austrians had been able to oppose only one corps to each pair of these columns. Had these conquered or opposed successful resistance in one position, they were still exposed to a turning of the rear by one of the other Prussian columns. The advantages which thus accrued to the enemy and the disadvantages which fell to their own lot, were soon recognized by the Austrians, but were not comprehended by the Prussian generals, or at any rate they were not utilized. Steinmetz was not able to accomplish much more at Nachod than to repulse the attacks of the enemy. Still Rammig went back as far as Skalitz because he took it for granted that the 2d Guard Division would not remain at Kosteletz, but would attack him in the rear. Hiller had only to cross the Aupa at Bausnitz to defeat Gablenz most decisively. Recognizing this danger, the Austrian Fieldmarshal left Trautenau on the day following his victory. At Burkersdorf, however, he might have opposed successful resistance to Hiller had he not believed that the only reasonable operation for the 2d Guard Division was to advance against his rear. The retreat from Munchengrätz was ordered because the advance towards Gitschin of the Prussian corps which had arrived at Turnau, appeared imminent on account of the situation. A Prussian attack at Skalitz was not necessary. Archduke Leopold would have retreated without it. But he should have been directed against the enemy who was advancing in the rear from the Iser. The

Crown Prince of Saxony was to break off the engagement at Gitschin because the Second Army threatened to cross the Elbe. Always threatened by a turning or enveloping movement, the Austrians were forced to concentrate toward their center and would have been surrounded, had the Prussian army and corps commanders known their business better.

The idea of annihilating the enemy, which completely absorbed Moltke, was not fathomed by the subordinate commanders. They understood the problem before them to lie in the junction of the separated armies. In this they agreed with Moltke. But he wished to see the opponent within the circle of the united armies, while they were willing to leave it to the enemy to concentrate his forces where he desired. Once the armies were concentrated, no matter where, it could then be decided whether to accept battle or not. For the commanding generals, the principal aim was to assemble 250,000 men at Gitschin or Miletin in a single mass. The enemy who sought to oppose the concentration must by all means be pushed aside, unless one were willing to continue the march on the designated point without considering the nearby adversary, as was attempted by Bonin at Trautenau and Steinmetz at Schweinschadel, and actually accomplished by Hiller at Parschnitz. This was easily accounted for. The commanding generals of the Second Army, as they considered, had not received the order to fight the enemy, but to reach Arna, Koniginhof, and Schurz on 28 June. From this task they were permitted to deviate as little as possible. Moreover, an attack of considerable importance could not be easily executed, as the troop units were separated from the very beginning. Steinmetz could repulse the enemy at Nachod, but could not attack him, because his corps, though it was on the ground, was scattered in small units all over the field. At Trautenau, General Grossmann was ordered to carry forward with him into the attack, along with his own ten battalions, the eight of Buddenbrock. It is said that he never received the order. But even had he received it, it would have been impossible to lead into the attack the ten battalions, scattered as they were into small detachments. At Skalitz the greater part of the Prussian infantry was

thrown into the Eichwald and the Fasanerie. Single companies might rush thence against the hostile position, but it was beyond human power to undertake an attack with mixed half-battalions, companies, and platoons. The united attack of Kirchbach at Skalitz encountered only a weakly occupied position and that of Hiller at Burkersdorf an already retreating enemy.

The First Army at least started orderly attacks. However, instead of letting the corps which encountered the enemy, attack him, and the remaining corps march on until they had reached the hostile flank or rear, a halt was first ordered, then everything prepared for an attack against front and flank. Before these movements were executed, the enemy, if there was any, had already retreated. The preparations were too thorough and took too much time. That the advance and deployment must go hand in hand was seen to be necessary. But the longer the marching columns, the greater were the difficulties encountered. The corps of that time had not yet been brought to the strength of the present corps in artillery and transportation, but they endeavored to replace their lack, on the march at least, by great intervals between the van-, the advance guard, the main body, the reserve infantry, the reserve artillery, and the reserve cavalry. These overlong columns advanced but slowly. At Nachod the last reserves reached the battlefield at 11:00 PM. Bonin might have reached Trautenau ahead of the enemy, had he not required the infantry, according to Regulations, to reconnoiter carefully the slopes along the road, behind houses, bushes, and mounds, to see if concealed enemies were not lurking there. To cross the Iser from the dense concentration at Reichenberg, the infantry of the First Army needed four whole days. The chief of staff, General von Voigts-Rhetz, complained of the terrain being too narrow for the deployment of all the troops. It lay in his hands to widen the narrow terrain right and left in order to give breathing space to the compressed masses. There surely could not be found in the movements of the First Army, the restlessness and impetus with which Napoleon rushed his columns onward. The battles were decided by strong artillery. This much was known of the wars of the begin-

ning of the century. In order not to exhaust this costly means too early, the reserve artillery was given a place far down the marching column. It was also well for the commander to be placed as late as possible into the embarrassment of using this strange arm. When an attack had at last to be made, the infantry stood perplexed and powerless in front of the long Austrian battery lines.

It might be supposed that the Austrians should have had easy work under the circumstances. But their mode of fighting did not lack considerable peculiarities. The eternal dispute over the problem whether soldiers armed with rifles should be deployed in line, where they may be able to use their weapons, or extended in depth where they will not be able to use them had been settled by the Austrians in the extreme latter sense. There stood at Nachod four brigades, one behind another, each in three lines, twelve in all. The columns of the two foremost battalions were not able to contend against one battalion deployed in one line. The fact that this battalion was armed with the needle gun was of no importance; the fight of the attacking column against the standing line had long been decided at Preussich-Eylau, Waterloo and recently, on the Alma, in favor of the latter. It is true that the devastating fire of the needle gun transformed the repulsed attack into a bloody defeat. The attack in deep columns, feeding the combat by their rifles, in conjunction with the invention of the locksmith's Journeyman Dreyse, had shaken the defeated corps of Rammig and Archduke Leopold to their very foundations, just as much as had the victorious corps of Gablenz. The decision, however, rested in the turning movements, advocated in Moltke's plan, which were not executed though they still threatened the enemy. The battles of the 27th and 28th of June, should have, in total, brought about the annihilation of the enemy on the part of the Second Army. They at least effected a victory. The many mistakes and sins of omission of the commanders could not, however, remain without result. It was well that the company commanders and platoon leaders were imbued with initiative and the capability of coming to a decision and that the rank and file were inspired with the highest spirit and a readiness to accomplish any-

thing. It was, however, impossible to gain decisive victories with a disorganized crowd. The Prussians had to be thankful that the enemy had let himself be induced to retreat not because of what had been done, but because of what he supposed had been done.

The troop leadership of the other army, too formal as a rule, appeared sufficient, as at Gitschin there was no time for lengthy preparations. A success was there won with inferior numbers which was converted into a real victory by pursuit. A column encountered a stronger enemy and fought indecisively. The neighboring column met a weaker opponent, threw him back and advanced against the rear of the stronger, doing what the Second Army ought to have done in every battle. This brought about the decision. The Austrian position became untenable, the intended defensive battle could not be fought. However, an immediate second attack by the Second Army against the hostile front and an advance of the First Army against Horitz—Koniggratz was not made so as to take advantage of the victory. This could not be executed with two divisions. The First Army and the Army of the Elbe, instead of having reached Chlumec with the right wing, stood with eight divisions far in the background. The enemy had time to escape from the surrounding movement. The battle of annihilation, planned by Moltke, was transformed into an "ordinary victory."

### KONIGGRATZ

On 27 June, 1866, one Austrian corps at Nachod and on the 28th two others at Skalitz and Burkersdorf were so crippled that their further use for either attack or defense seemed doubtful. Consequently, Benedek formed a plan for defensive with two corps against the enemy who was coming from the east, and for an attack with six corps against an opponent marching from the west, which was impossible of execution. The forces at his disposition were no longer sufficient for the simultaneous solution of two quite difficult problems. However, since the enemy from the west was advancing very slowly, he could be left alone for a

Map 49.

short time during which all the forces should be employed against the other enemy who, it seemed was impetuously advancing. Had the latter been defeated, there would have been sufficient time to turn with the victorious army against the other opponent. The Crown Prince of Saxony was immediately called up. Eight corps were to be thrown against the four corps of the Prussian Second Army. Even though the possibility of utilizing three of the eight corps was doubtful, much could be said in favor of the success of the new plan. The Prussian First Army was, in reality, intending to allow itself to be held up two or three days at the Iser by an enemy existing only in its imagination and it seemed needless to consider it. The last corps of the day-long marching column of the Austrians had arrived on 29 June. Two others came up on the same day, having remained on the 28th on the left bank of the Elbe, though not without suffering losses and having encounters in rear of the protecting river. Six corps were assembled there in the evening. They seemed sufficient, in a strong position, for the successful repulse of an attack by the Second Prussian Army on the 30th. The Crown Prince of Saxony could come up on the same day and on 1 July, it would have been possible to pass to an overwhelming attack on the repulsed enemy.

But this plan had hardly been adopted when one condition after another, necessary for its success, disappeared. Early on the 29th the Prussian First Army was ordered by Moltke to leave alone the self-created enemy and to go immediately to the assistance of the Second Army. It obeyed the orders as well and promptly as it was possible from the narrow area to which it was confined. The Crown Prince of Saxony, who had remained in Gitschin according to a previously received order, was ordered to come up immediately at a time when he had already been drawn into a serious combat. The Prussian Second Army did not attack on the 30th, and, consequently, could not be repulsed. The two opponents were occupied by an aimless cannonading. Instead of the desired attack, the following was learned during the day: The Crown Prince of Saxony had been defeated the evening of the 29th at Gitschin, the 1st Light Cavalry Division and the Saxon Corps had retreated to Smidar, the

I Corps to Miletin and Horitz, while many detachments of the two corps had scattered in several directions. Hostile cavalry appeared in front of Horitz by noon. Count Clam-Gallas had, consequently, retreated immediately to Koniggratz. Once more two corps appeared to have been beaten. Thus Benedek had only the six corps assembled between Jaromer and Miletin. With these he had to face on the following day, not only the hoped for attack of four corps against the front, but a very undesirable one of five against flank and rear. He then probably considered the recipe given by Clausewitz "what was left him of the masses which might still be called available, i.e., which had not burnt out like extinct volcanoes." He must have also considered "how stood it with the security of his rear" and must have found that he had about five extinct volcanoes on his hands, while three corps were still available and that the security of his rear was quite defective. From the results of these considerations, then arose the decision to abandon the battlefield.

The III Corps was brought in the afternoon from Miletin to Lancow, the trains sent out in advance in the evening; at 1:00 AM, of 1 July, six corps, four cavalry divisions, and the army artillery reserve started the march. The execution of the retreat was not easy. The enemy, whose cavalry had caught up with I Corps about noon of the 30th, could be expected any moment from the line: Horitz—Neubidschow. If it were desired to avoid a flanking attack from that direction by crossing the Elbe, it must be expected that the Second Army would attack from the direction from the Mettau. The march was resumed in the night in four columns on a narrow strip between the Lancow road, Gross-Burglitz, Sadowa, and the Elbe. As the numerous trains often blocked the road, the march columns were very long and friction could not be avoided, and it is not to be wondered at that at 10:00 AM, the III Corps was still at Lancow, that a rear-guard with some artillery was seen at Liebthal (3 km. south of Koniginhof) and that only late at night, about 2:00 AM, the last troops reached their designated bivouacks in the region: Sadowa—Koniggratz—Elbe—Trotina. The Saxon Corps and the 1st Light Cavalry Division had been drawn via

Map 52.

Neubidschow and Nechanitz to Lubno and Nieder-Prim (2 and 5 kms. east of Nechanitz).

The army, brought back by Benedek, was a completely defeated one. What had been left of spirit up to the 30th, had been lost entirely through the night march. The sights, coming under the eyes of the commander-in-chief during this retreat, robbed him of the rest of his confidence in his army and in himself. He telegraphed in despair about noon on the 1st, upon his arrival at Koniggratz: "I urgently implore Your Majesty to conclude peace at any price; a catastrophe to the army is unavoidable." A catastrophe would surely have taken place, had the enemy followed even with cavalry alone, if the retreat had been transformed into flight and dissolution. But since no enemy was to be seen, since no encounter had taken place at any point, some hope arose again in the heart of the unfortunate general. Patrols were sent out in various directions in order to bring information about the inexplicable absence of the enemy. The telegram, arriving from Vienna in the afternoon: "Impossible to conclude peace. If unfavorable, I order you to retreat in the best order. Has there been a battle?", found Benedek more composed. He prepared the positions of the troops, was greeted by them heartily, spoke words of encouragement, ordered fortifications to be built on the side facing the enemy between Nedelist and Lipa and expressed his impressions and intentions in the following telegram: "VI and X Corps have suffered terribly, the VIII very much, the I and the Saxon Corps have likewise suffered and need several days to assemble, the IV Corps also had some losses. Of eight corps, without a battle, and only with partial encounters, but two are intact, and these, as well as the cavalry, are greatly fatigued. The great losses were mostly caused by the needle gun fire, all who have even been in battle being greatly impressed by its murderous effect. All this forced me to retreat to this point. I found on the road the massed trains of the army, which could not be sent to the rear and if, under such circumstances, the enemy had delivered an energetic attack, before the I and Saxon Corps were again in order and the army somewhat rested, a catastrophe would have been unavoidable. Fortu-

nately the enemy up to the present moment has not pressed forward; consequently, I will let the army rest tomorrow and send the trains to the rear, but can not remain here any longer, because by day after tomorrow there will be a lack of drinking water in camp so that I shall continue the retreat on the 3d to Pardubitz. If the enemy does not intercept me, I shall be able to count again on the troops. Should occasion for an offensive movement arise, I shall deliver the blow, otherwise I shall endeavor to bring the army, as well as possible, back to Olmutz and to obey Your Majesty's order in so far as it lies in my power, yet always with unhesitating readiness for sacrifice."

Had this telegram reached, in some way or other, hostile headquarters, it would have been considered as a precious possession. And still, it did not contain anything that had not been known so far. The Second Army boasted of having defeated four hostile corps, and the First of having destroyed two. What could have become of these ruins after a night march undertaken hastily over a narrow strip? Although the cavalry, in spite of its urgent request, had been placed in security in rear of the infantry, Hartmann's Cavalry Division sent in a direction opposite to that of the enemy, and although the Prussians had cut off themselves wilfully from all information about the enemy, yet this much was known: the defeated enemy had retreated hastily and should have been pursued without delay. One part of the army should have marched behind him along the Elbe. Two other parts should have accompanied him on the right and left, turning towards his flanks as soon as he halted and took up the defensive. A fourth part, especially the cavalry, should have tried to intercept him, to bar his road, to hold him until the other parts arrived. Thus had Hannibal acted at Cannae, thus Napoleon at Jena, thus could it have been done here since the enemy could move or rest only in dense masses. An order from Moltke, received during the night of 1 July, gave moreover, information concerning the method and direction of the pursuit. It read as follows: "The Second Army must remain on the left bank of the Elbe, its right wing ready to join the left of the advancing First Army via Koniginhof. The First Army must march without halting

to Koniggratz. General von Herwarth will attack larger hostile units on the right flank of the advance march, cutting them off from the main forces." This order was issued at the time when the Austrian main army was as yet on the right of the upper Elbe between Jaromer and Miletin, when Gitschin had been evacuated and the Second Army was awaiting an attack by Benedek. After the Austrian army had withdrawn, Moltke's instructions ought to have been adapted to the changed situation. The left bank of the Elbe should no longer have been occupied between Koniginhof and Jaromer, but wherever the enemy might have taken up a position on the other bank. Since the enemy had withdrawn to the south, the advance of the First Army should have been in a more southerly direction, the Army of the Elbe should have been shifted toward the right.

Map 52.

From this it is deduced: the Army of the Elbe should march in the direction of Chlumetz and Pardubitz on 1 July, about as far as Konigstadt and Gross-Hluschitz (west of Neubidschow), the First Army, awaiting the neighboring army, advancing only as far as Neubidschow, Milowitz, Gross-Jeritz. The right wing of the Second Army should join the left of the First Army, the I Corps, already ordered to Aulejow, march on Miletin and Zabres, the Guard to Lititsch and Salnai. The left wing of the same army should go to Skalitz and Kleny. In the evening of the 1st, before the last hostile troops had entered the narrow strip at Koniggratz between the Elbe and Bistritz, the three Prussian armies would have stood on the line: Konigstadt—Kleny. The Prussian Royal headquarters could not foresee whether the Austrians would make a stand on the 2d or again withdraw before the attack; therefore, all measures should have been taken for a continuation of the pursuit. On the left bank of the Elbe, the Koniggratz—Hohenbruck—Tinist road could have been reached on the 2d, on the right bank the right wing of the Army of the Elbe could almost have reached Bodanetsch (northwest of Pardubitz). Only the road leading from Koniggratz via Pardubitz, Sezemitz, and Holitz would have been available for the retreat of the Austrians. For the retreat from the Upper Elbe to Sadowa, Koniggratz, and Tratina six corps needed 24 hours on the

1st, marching on four roads. Eight corps on three roads would have needed much more time. Before the rearguard could have gained room for the march, it would have been overtaken by the I and the Guard Corps, coming via Horenowes and Smiritz, and at the same time the flanks of the miles-long columns would have been attacked by the corps of the First Army and the Army of the Elbe, marching on parallel roads. The Austrians would have had to halt and take the defensive. Even the leading columns might have been prevented from escaping if the Prussian cavalry had been utilized correctly and, of course, had been armed for the purpose. Had the cavalry corps taken from the start a place on or in front of the right wing of the Army of the Elbe, had Hartmann's Cavalry Division accompanied the left wing of the Second Army, the former would have been able to block in good time the crossing at Pardubitz and Sezemitz, the latter the road from Holitz. The Austrian army would have been surrounded in the evening of the 2d, no matter whether it went forward, backward, or remained stationary.

It was quite out of the question for Moltke's order to be executed in this manner or any other. Both army headquarters did not think of pursuing the enemy, still less of surrounding or annihilating him. All that had transpired so far was considered by them as an introduction to the war. The battles waged so far were not to be ascribed to the one or other side as considerable gain or loss. Strength had been tested and weighed on both sides. The troops would now have to be assembled into one mass and a decisive battle fought. But the "decisive battle" had already been fought on the 27th, 28th, and 29th. During these three days, the right wing and the center of the Austrian army had been thrown beyond the Elbe, after hot fights. Moltke had succeeded during the last day in bringing forward at least part of the numerous reserves, in throwing back entirely the hostile left wing and thus forcing the remainder of the Austrian army to retreat. The battle had not come out as had been desired and expected. It was not a battle of annihilation, but it was, at least, a battle rendering the greater part of the hostile army unavailable for further

fighting. Nothing could be changed in the incomplete results obtained by preparation for a newly planned battle. An attempt should have been made by immediate pursuit to recover what had been lost. Though Moltke's plan had been badly disfigured, the armies were placed not unfavorably for such a pursuit. The fact that the Second Army remained on the left bank of the Elbe especially allowed of itself the cutting off of the retreat, as was attained with difficulty in similar campaigns of 1757, 1800, and 1870. But army headquarters opposed strenuous objections to this remaining on the left bank of the Elbe. Separated by the river from the First Army, it thought itself exposed to "isolation and defeat." This apprehension was in great contrast to the existing condition of the Austrian army, defeated in six encounters and combats. Had the latter been on the left bank of the Elbe, it would have been necessary to bring the First Army and the Army of the Elbe to that bank, but never to take the Second Army to the right bank.

Map 53.

Moltke succeeded with the greatest difficulty only in keeping three corps on the left bank on 1 July, while the I Corps went as far as Prausnitz and its advance guard as far as Aulejow. However, he could not prevent the First Army from going after the enemy to Horitz—Miletin instead of Neubidschow—Horitz, or the Army of the Elbe from turning toward Hoch-Wessely instead of going in the direction of Chlumetz. It was impossible to resist the urgent request for a day's rest on the 2d. Only the Army of the Elbe was expected to march to Smidar. Thus pursuit was abandoned and a new campaign had to be considered.

Many believed the enemy to be behind the Elbe between Koniggratz and Josefstadt, while others thought him at Pardubitz, still others at Kolin. But Moltke wanted to know something more definite before preparing for a new attack; the Second Army was ordered to clear up the situation by a reconnaissance across the Mettau. In the meanwhile, the Army of the Elbe was to march on the 3d to Chlumetz, the First to the line Neubidschow—Horitz, the I Corps to Gross-Burglitz and Cerekwitz, the remainder of the Second Army remaining on the left bank. Moltke's order ended "should there remain any strong hostile units in front of the Elbe,

these should be immediately attacked with as great a numerical superiority as possible." There were, in reality, strong hostile units said to be in front of the Elbe. For at the time when the order was issued, Benedek telegraphed to Vienna: "The army will remain tomorrow in its position at Koniggratz; the day's rest and the abundant food have had a good effect. I hope no further retreat will be necessary." The Emperor's question: "Has there been a battle?" induced the general, 24 hours after he had reported his army as exposed to a catastrophe, to prepare for battle in a position in which he was absolutely sure to be surrounded.

However carefully the Prussians had avoided maintaining touch with the enemy, the immediate vicinity of the Austrians could no longer remain concealed during the day of rest. The outposts of the Prussian advance guard at Milowitz and those of the Austrian rearguard at Dub could not be more than 2 km. distant from each other. An officer from headquarters of the First Army, having boldly broken through the outposts, reported: II Corps at Sadowa, X Corps at Langenhof; in rear of these toward Koniggratz; the I and the Saxons near Probus. Another officer, who had ridden beyond Gross-Burglitz, had found Benatek occupied and a cavalry regiment advancing toward Josefstadt from Miletin had observed large bodies of infantry. It could be concluded with a great degree of probability that the entire Austrian army or at least its greater part, was still in front of the Elbe behind the Bistritz. The right wing did not extend beyond Benatek, the left reached at least as far as Probus. The latter case, foreseen in Moltke's order, had thus happened. The enemy, still in front of the Elbe, must be immediately attacked "with as great a numerical superiority as possible," i.e., with all available forces. The spirit of the order would have been obeyed had the First Army advanced against the supposedly 12 km. long front: Probus—Benatek, the Army of the Elbe and the Cavalry Corps prolonging the right wing and the I Corps and the Guard Corps the left. These overlapping wings would have pushed the enemy in his narrow front and deep formation, against the

Elbe. For blocking the left bank, the V and VI Corps, as well as Hartmann's Cavalry Division were available which should have started the march as early as on the 2d. Great marches had to be demanded of the left wing of the Second Army and of the Army of the Elbe. But, since the Landwehr Division of the Guard had made on that day 35 km. from Kopidlno to Nechanitz, the younger and better trained troops could have fulfilled the request in the highest degree. If not a complete, at least a partial surrounding could have been made on the 3d. It would not have been rendered easier had the First Army stormed forward from the very beginning. It would have been more advantageous to await the coming up of the wings. Should it so happen, which was hardly to be expected, that the enemy would break through across the Bistritz, he would find himself so much the quicker and surer in the annihilating, all-encompassing surrounding movement. Such a deployment and such an attack corresponded to the ideas of Hannibal at Cannæ, of Napoleon at Jena, but in no way to the views held in those days. Mass attacks against the front and heaping up of reserves were considered more important than surrounding movements and flanking attacks.

Map 54.

Headquarters of the First Army was the first to receive the reports concerning the whereabouts of the Austrian troops on the right bank of the Elbe. It is desired to choose independently the measures for the execution of the attack ordered. According to the picture evolved in its views, the enemy occupied "with very considerable forces," (two corps), the "position of Sadowa," and with one corps that of Probus. Against the former, five divisions of the First Army were to assemble at Milowitz, one other, the 7th to join them at Sadowa, after coming from Gross-Jeritz via Cerekwitz and Benatek; against the latter position—the Army of the Elbe was to assemble at Nechanitz.

The position of Sadowa was to be sought beyond the Bistritz on the heights of Lipa and Langenhof. A mass attack, even of 70,000 or more men, against the front of this strong position, defended by a numerous and excellent artillery, promised no success. The situation of the Army of

the Elbe seemed more favorable. The left wing of the enemy, no matter how far it extended beyond Probus, could not find a secure support. But close behind the Saxons the I Corps had been reported. Two corps should surely be able to repulse the attack of two to three divisions of the Army of the Elbe. In spite of the disadvantage of these conditions, headquarters of the First Army was sure of success, held that its mass attack of 70,000 men would be irresistible and the "annihilation" of the enemy assured. The possibility of a flanking attack from Josefstadt alone caused concern. Headquarters of the Second Army was requested to parry such a flank attack with the Guard Corps from Koniginhof. The request was granted. The VI Corps was sent to demonstrate at Josefstadt, the V Corps and the Guard were placed beyond the Elbe in reserve, the I Corps marching via Miletin to Gross-Burglitz and Cerekwitz. Thus six divisions were held fast in front of Josefstadt, the same number at Sadowa, three at Nechanitz (facing a difficult problem), while two marched alone to an indefinite goal and an indefinite fate.

The Prussian successes were won so far through the "needle gun fire" and by "outflanking." The needle gun fire was now to be limited as much as possible by mass and deep formation and outflanking to be met by shortening the front. The strength of the Austrians lay in the long artillery lines, well and effectively posted, their weakness lay in the shock tactics. The Prussians had thus to accept these and attack them in the front.

If the picture, evolved by the First Army, were true to reality, the 3d would probably have brought no results either for the one or the other side. Since, however, not four but eight Austrian corps had remained this side of the Elbe, the plan of battle, issued from the common laboratory of the two army headquarters, contained dangers for the Prussian arms. Fortunately, the chief of staff of the First Army went on the evening of the 2d to the Royal Headquarters at Gitschin to report what had been reconnoitered and ordered. As the troops of the First Army were already on the march, the orders issued for the attack against the front could no

longer be directed through the suitable channels. It was necessary to rely upon the inability of the enemy to take the offensive. On Moltke's recommendation, the King ordered that the Second Army "advance with all its forces to support the First Army against the probably approaching enemy and attack as soon as possible." Since the question now was of hours only, it was impossible to cause part of the Second Army to advance on the left bank of the Elbe. All four corps were crowded together in the narrow strip between the Elbe and the Bistritz. This limited the hope of an attack against the rear of the enemy to the possibility of finding a bridge below Josefstadt or of restoring one. This possibility could be ascertained only during the course of the day. Moltke's next endeavor was to execute an attack against the left flank of the enemy, even if this should expose the front to a breaking through.

Considering the proximity of the enemy, Benedek expected an attack on the 3d or on the 4th at the latest. The troops should then take position as follows: the III Corps on the heights of Lipa and Chlum; to its right the IV Corps on the heights between Chlum and Nedelist; and the II Corps in the space between Nedelist and the Elbe. To the left of the III Corps, the X Corps was to take position at Langenhof and the Saxon Corps on the heights east of Tresowitz and Popowitz. According to the representation of the Crown Prince of Saxony that on these heights his flank was exposed from Hradek, the Saxon Corps was sent back to Probus and Nieder-Prim and the VIII Corps was kept in support in addition to the 1st Light Cavalry Division. The general reserves were: the I Corps at Rosnitz, the VI at Wsestar, the 2d Light Cavalry Division south of Nedelist and the 1st and 3d Reserve Cavalry Divisions at Briza.

As all others, the front of this position had its weak points and disadvantages. Thanks to the numerous and excellent Austrian, and the insufficient and badly employed Prussian artillery, these would scarcely have been noticed. So much the greater care should have been given to the flanks. The left was entirely in the air. The VIII Corps, only 3 brigades strong, defeated at Skalitz, was not able to ward

off the dangers threatening through this condition. Resting the right flank on the Elbe was quite illusive. The river did not form an impassable obstacle, least of all for artillery projectiles. The river was bridged at many points and at others it was possible to construct bridges or to ford it. The position here was untenable if even a part of the Second Army advanced on the left bank. Should that army remain on the right bank and near Nedelist encounter serious resistance, part of the troops would have penetrated, without army orders, with elemental force to the unoccupied opposite bank and would have forced the hostile right flank to retreat. Should the Austrians remain stationary, they would be crushed, almost entirely surrounded, and annihilated. Hope of success lay in the offensive alone. Should Benedek stand firm on the right wing and in the center, and advance with four or five corps and as many cavalry divisions via Tresowitz, Nechanitz, Kuntschitz, etc., against the weak Army of the Elbe, and against the right flank of the First Army, a victory lay entirely within the scope of possibilities, provided, however, that the Austrian army was capable of such an offensive. Above all, it was an essential condition that the right wing should maintain its position. This prerequisite was eliminated when the commander of the IV Corps, Count Festetics, found the position assigned to him, between Chlum and Nedelist, unfavorable and advanced to the heights of Maslowed which seemed better, and when the commander of the II Corps, Count Thun, in executing his order to cover the right flank of the IV Corps, followed to Maslowed-Horenoves and left only Henriquez's Brigade at Sendrasitz. The Austrian Army stood thus between Horenoves and Probus, instead of between Benatek and Probus, as reports made it appear, though it amounted almost to the same thing. The advance of the First Army and of the Army of the Elbe against this position led to three separate battles at Nechanitz, Sadowa, and Benatek.

The Army of the Elbe started at 3:00 AM, from Lhotz, Smidar, Chotelitz, and Hoch-Wesely in three columns to Prasek, Kobilitz, and Lodin. From these points it might have reached the left bank of the Bistritz, via Boharna,

Map 54.

Map 55.

Kuntschitz, and Nechanitz. But on the report that Nechanitz was occupied, Herwarth assembled all three columns in order to break through, with one irresistible column, this 1000 meter defile, consisting of dams and bridges, situated in front of Nechanitz. The commander of the advance guard, General von Scholer, had already sent out two battalions via Kuntschitz, one via Komarow, and had thus opened the defile, driven off the weak enemy and advanced with his seven battalions to the line: Hradek—Lubno. Covered by this position, one division could cross after the other. The hostile position, whose left flank was believed to have been reconnoitered at Nieder-Prim, was to be attacked from the south, this appearing to be the most natural and logical plan. The advance guard, its left wing resting on the Bistritz lowland, could remain stationary for the present, the leading Division, (Canstein's), could join the attack by the right and through the wood of Stezirek via Ober-Prim, the following divisions (Munster's and Etzel's) and the Cavalry Corps gradually extending the right flank. Moltke absolutely required such a flank attack. Herwarth, on the contrary, held to an advance against the front. Canstein was to turn via Neu-Prim and the Fasauerie to Nieder-Prim, and Munster to advance from Lubno through the Popowitz wood on Probus. So much would be conceded to Moltke that one of Canstein's brigades would be directed through the wood of Stezirek to Ober-Prim. More could not be done, with the best of good will, for the old man. Cannonading sounded warningly from Sadowa. The battle there seemed to be at a standstill if it were not receding. It was a sacred duty to go "to the rescue of the First Army." It was still more important to hold Etzel back west of Nechanitz. He should remain there in case the two other divisions were driven back through the 1000 meter defile by the numerical superiority of the enemy. Herwarth's instructions were fraught with great danger, should the enemy fall upon Canstein's right with his numerous reserves, and with his right wing and the left wing of the X Corps, attack Munster's left flank.

Of the hostile troops, the Saxon 2d Brigade was in touch with Gablenz between Stresetitz and Probus. The

3d Brigade occupied Probus and Nieder-Prim with one regiment each. Three batteries had gone into position between the two villages. In rear of Probus stood Stieglitz's Division (the Life Guard and 1st Brigades), six reserve batteries and the Cavalry Division. The left flank was covered southeast of Probus by Schulz's Austrian Brigade, which had sent its two batteries into position north of the village and finally by Roth's Brigade near the Briza wood. Consequently there were, considerable forces at hand to enable them taking a general offensive against the enemy sooner or later and to surround him on both sides. Such movements, however, did not belong to the spirit of the times. A forcible piercing of the evening's position seemed more to the point. Scholer's advance guard was an excellent means to that end, advancing in front of the two divisions, on the right through the woods of Stezirek, in the center through Neu-Prim and the Fasauerie and on the left toward the Popowitz woods. The Life Guard Brigade with one battery was brought up. It was to advance over the meadow grounds south of Nieder-Prim against Neu-Prim, Schulz's Brigade covering its left flank. Six companies of the garrison of Nieder-Prim joined it. Two battalions were driven back, the Fasauerie and Neu-Prim were taken. At this juncture Scholer's right flank battalion arrived. It had driven the Austrian battalion from the Waldvon Stezirek and advanced against Ober-Prim opening fire against the left flank of the Life Guard Brigade. The piercing was not continued. The flank and rear had first to be secured. The six companies from Nieder-Prim returned to their posts. The Life Guard Brigade drew closer to the village. The 2d Brigade was sent to its support from the extreme right wing and Roth's Brigade was sent to the support of Schulz's. The cavalry divisions were to go around the woods on the south. Schulz's Brigade drove the Austrian battalion away from Ober-Prim and pursued it south through the woods. Within the woods it encountered Canstein's right brigade. Of the left brigade only six companies continued the march to Neu-Prim, the rest entered the woods through a misunderstanding and fell unexpectedly on the flank of Schulz's Brigade engaged in

combat with the right brigade. Schulz's Brigade retreated in confusion, carried Roth along, was thrown at Ober-Prim upon both Saxon brigades, which were preparing to resume the attempt to break through. Rapid fire from the wood and from the six companies arriving from Neu-Prim was poured into the mass of the four brigades. Confusion and retreat ensued under cover of a few steadfast battalions. "In order to prevent a spread of the rout," the 1st Brigade was placed behind an abatis at the edge of the wood east of Problus, three reserve batteries drove up on the east in prolongation of the southern edge of Nieder-Prim. Schulz and Roth occupied the western edge, Woher's Brigade which had just arrived, occupying the southern edge of the Briza woods. Canstein's Division had to stop its pursuit before the wide front: Nieder-Prim—Briza woods. Headquarters of the Army of the Elbe might now have had a misgiving that Moltke was not so very wrong, that Munster ought to have been on the right and not on the left of Canstein and that no more effective support of the First Army could have been given than by driving back the enemy from Problus and Nieder-Prim to Stresetitz, Langenhof, and Lipa. They must now wait until Munster should come up, and until he and Canstein, by a concentric attack, should drive the enemy to a position farther east.

The troops of the First Army, opposite Sadowa, had already been put in readiness during the night. At 6:00 AM, the advance guard of Horn's Division advanced from Klenitz in deployed front. Dub was evacuated, but the Zegelei west of Sadowa, was occupied. A combat took place at this point. An Austrian battery, in position between the Holawald and Swiepwald took part. As soon as the first shot was heard, Fransecky started his division at 7:30 AM, from Cerekwitz towards Benatek. At about the same time the 5th and 6th Divisions deployed at Klenitz. About 8:00 AM, Herwarth (4th Division), followed by the reserve artillery of the II Corps reached Mzan via Stratschow, Werder-Zawadilka via Lhota and the Cavalry Corps, Sucha. All villages on the Bistritz from Popowitz to Sadowa inclusive of the Zuckerfabuck south of Sadowa and the Skalka woods

were occupied by the enemy. Fransecky's advance guard was also under fire coming from Benatek and Horenowes.

The King arrived at Dub at 8:00 AM, and ordered the Bistritz line to be captured. Horn left his advance guard in position against Sadowa, turned with his main body and the reserve to Sowetitz and crossed the brook at the Skalka. The enemy evacuated Sadowa. Horn sent two battalions to join Fransecky and turned with the rest toward the Holawald. Herwarth had engaged early at Mzan in an artillery action, marched against the Zuckerfabuck and Unter Dohalitz and crossed the Bistritz. Both divisions, Herwarth and Horn, penetrated into the Holawald and occupied the southern edge as well as Ober Dohalitz keeping twelve battalions in rear of the woods. Werder's Division succeeded in occupying Dohalitzka and Mokrowous. A success was achieved. The advanced hostile detachments on the Bistritz were driven back. But on the heights of Lipa and Langenhof, as far as Tresowitz stood a long line of 160 guns. The smooth bore guns of the Prussians could do nothing against them and were withdrawn; the rifled guns, few in number, without room for deployment and not under united command, were at a decided disadvantage. In the lowland, guns in rear of the ridge and their effect could not be observed on account of the fog and powder smoke. Their shots, blindly fired, did not prevent the enemy from concentrating his fire on the Holawald and Upper Dohalitz.

On the southern edge of this point, on a front of 1200 meters, stood first seven, then nine and finally eleven battalions crowded into adjacent columns. They presented an impenetrable wall to all attacks, a wall which, however, was greatly damaged by ceaselessly exploding shells, broken branches and falling trees. A strong line of skirmishers, well posted, one or at the most two battalions, as had been done with the well known 2d Battalion, 37th Regiment, at Nachod, would have afforded greater security and suffered smaller losses. But, most important of all, it would have been able to gradually work up to effective range. A larger number of battalions stood in rear of the wood and occupied Sadowa. They were not in security. For at will and accord-

ing to the humor he was in, the enemy let his batteries play on them too. Finally, the 5th and 6th Divisions crossed the Bistritz and awaited, under a devastating shell fire, the order to advance.

For on both sides, the two leaders watched with eagle eyes for the favorable moment to attack. Should the Prussian columns attack, they would suffer Augereau's fate at Preussisch-Eylau, should the Austrian masses advance, the fate of Hertweck's Brigade at Nachod would surely be theirs. But of all means to attain victory, only piercing the enemy is worthy of a great general. The hour of a Wagram or an Austerlitz must strike at last. "Not yet," said Moltke. "It will not succeed and, should it succeed, the two annihilating flanking attacks will fail in their effect." "Not yet," said Baumbach, Benedek's chief of staff, on the other side. "Such battles last, at least, two days. Tomorrow when the combatants will have fought to utter exhaustion, it will be time to send forward Claim's and Rammig's Corps (I and VI)." He might also have said: "If we should succeed in driving back the Prussians in front of us, the flank attacks would wreak our destruction so much the quicker." Both commanders were content. Prince Frederick Charles wanted to await the arrival of the Crown Prince. Benedek felt sure that "his old soldier's luck" would grant him the opportune moment. Thus they waited and waited.

Fransecky's Division had come under artillery fire from Horenowes and Maslowed at Benatek. The position of the hostile right wing on the line: Lipa—Maslowed—Horenowes, thus showed itself. The march of the Divisions of Horn and Fransecky was directed against this part of the position via Sowetitz and Benatek and, against this part they should have advanced, to hold the enemy at this point while Herwarth and Werder solved a similar problem on the other side of the road, Manstein and Tumpling lengthening the line at least as far as Nechanitz, six divisions attacking the long front, leaving the Army of the Elbe free for the flanking attack. But obeying the rule of assembling masses, Horn turned toward the Holawald, Fransecky wishing to reach the same goal via the Swiepwald and Cistowes. This flank march by Fransecky along the front of two corps could not

succeed. It is true that the hostile advanced troops were driven out of Benatek and further out of the Swiepwald and that even Cistowes was occupied. But when the enemy made a counterattack from the line: Chlum—Maslowed—Fasauerie, Fransecky had the greatest difficulty in escaping from being surrounded on the south and east. The southern part of the wood was lost to him, though he held out in the northern part and in the houses west of Cistowes by straining all his forces.

Lieutenant Fieldmarshal Mollinary, who had taken over the command of the IV Corps in place of the wounded Count Festetics, wanted to follow up the advantages gained. He proposed to Count Thun to advance with his right wing from Horenowes. Fransecky was to be driven off by an attack from all sides, after which the entire Prussian position on the Bistritz would be rolled up. This was splendidly planned. But 38 Austrian battalions took the longest time to overpower 14 Prussian ones. It is doubtful if five fresh battalions at Horenowes and six others in the center would have sufficed for the execution of the magnificent project. However that might have been, Benedek's order put a stop to the offensive which had hardly begun: "the IV and II Corps will return to the position Chlum, Nedelist, Elbe, to which they were assigned." Mollinary's personal representation was of no avail. A telegram from the Commandant of Josefstadt had arrived, saying: "(22) The VI Prussian Corps apparently intends to operate against the right flank of our army from Gradlitz via Salnai, etc.; strong columns are marching past here."

Map 54.

The Prussian Second Army which, it was hoped would remain inactive on 3 July, as it had been during previous days, had begun to move. Mollinary's proposition to attack the new enemy with the I and VI Corps, did not inspire confidence. Now that the entire Second Army was advancing, the execution of the offensive movement was impossible, even had the I and VI Corps come up in time. All that could be undertaken was the defense either of the foremost line: Maslowed—Horenowes—Trotina—Back or the line, situated

Map 55.

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(22) Compare Map 56.

more to the rear, Chlum—Nedelist—Elbe. Both could be held a certain time, especially if the defender were reinforced. But neither could be held indefinitely. The selection of one or the other was of no importance. It was bad in any case that the II and IV Corps had to be withdrawn. To take troops out of a serious and bloody combat, means to declare them defeated, means to tell them that they are not able to cope with the adversary. This was here so much the more critical as the Austrians had arrived, through the battles of the foregoing days, at the conviction that they were unable to cope with the better arms of the Prussians. It was doubtful if the II Corps would have been able to execute a long flank march and to form "a defensive hook" between Nedelist and the Elbe. The two corps of the right wing began to retreat and from this retreat developed naturally the retreat of the entire army.

The Brigades of Saffran and Wurttemberg of the II Corps were taken back to Maslowed from the combat at the Swiep-Wald, having to march thence toward Nedelist. To cover this march, Thom's Brigade moved from Horenowes to the hill between Maslowed and Sendrasitz, taking along 40 guns and a weak infantry detachment at Horenowes fronting north. Henriquez's Brigade was holding Ratschitz and the wooded bank of the Trotina, with two battalions, occupying later a position, Trotina village with four battalions. Of these, one kept the space between the creek and the Elbe under observation and the other secured the bridges at Lochenitz and Predmeritz. These were loose rear guards, easily surrounded and easily rolled up, who, about noon opposed the advancing Second Army.

The latter had not hurried. Moltke's order had been sent at midnight from Gitschin, reaching headquarters at Koniginhof about 4:00 AM, and only at 7:30 AM, did the 1st Division of the Guard, stationed there, receive the order to begin the march. At 8:30 AM, the advance guard of this division at Doubrawitz received orders to occupy a position there, entrench itself and await further orders. General von Alversleben did not allow this order to keep him from answering Fransecky's call for help, which reached him at

the same time, and marched immediately to the rescue. One hour later the main body followed. At 4:00 PM, the IV Army Corps had been given discretion to start before the arrival of army orders. Five and one half hours later, the advance guard started from Aulejow. At 11:00 PM it had not yet reached Gross-Burglitz. The VI Corps was instructed to start from Gradlitz, the 12th Division leaving at 6:00 AM, the 21st Brigade at 7:00 AM, and the 22d Division at 8:00 AM, in order to make a demonstration against Josefstadt, after having crossed over to the right bank at Schurz, Stangendorf, and Kukus. The columns, already on the move, had only to be diverted to their new points of destination. Thus marched the I Corps, followed by the Cavalry Division, via Gross-Trotin and Zabres to Gross-Burglitz, the Guard via Doubrawitz, Dubenetz, and Choteborek to Jericek and Lhota, the 11th Division followed by the V Corps, via Sibojed and Lititsch to Welchow, the 12th Division via Salnai, Westetz, and Ertina. Continuing the march, the 1st Division of the Guard reached Choteborek, the 11th Division, on the right bank of the Trotina, the heights north of Ratschitz, the 12th Division, Habrina, all at 11:00 AM. The 1st Guard Division and the 11th Division had in front of them the great battery of Horenowes, the 11th and 12th encountered at Ratschitz and at the hill east of the Trotina detachments of Henriquez's Brigade. At Wrchowitz, as well as northwest of Ratschitz, 48 guns were brought into action. The infantry advanced at this juncture. Ratschitz and the hill on the other bank of the Trotina fell into the hands of the Prussians. The advance guard of the 1st Guard Division finally succeeded in taking Horenowes from the west and in forcing the hostile battery to retreat. All three divisions advanced further, with some fighting: on the right to the hill of Horenowes, then to the plateau east of Maslowed, in the center to the south of Ratschitz and further to Sendrasitz, on the left via Rodow against Trotina Village.

Again they met in their front an artillery line, extending from north of Chlum to Nedelist. Under cover of 120 guns, three brigades of the Austrian II Corps retreated through the defile of Maslowed to Nedelist, left one brigade at this

Map 54.

Map 55.

Map 56.

point, and continued their march to occupy a position to the eastward.

The Austrian IV Corps began the retreat much later than the II. The almost entirely unscathed Brigade of Archduke Joseph took up a position between Chlum and Trench III. The remnants of the Brigades of Brandenstein and Poekh sought security farther back. Fleischhacker's Brigade was still occupying Cistowes. On the Prussian side the 12th Division was held back at Trotina by Henriquez's Brigade. The 11th Division could not advance from Sendrasitz in the direction of Nedelist because of the hot artillery fire. Only the 1st Division of the Guard (about 8 battalions) succeeded, under cover of artillery which arrived at Maslowed, in descending southward to the lowland, and, covered by fog and powder smoke, possibly also by the tall wheat, in climbing the steep slope opposite. The Austrian infantry, exhausted by march and combat, depended on the protection of their strong artillery. The latter, however, was kept occupied by that of the enemy. The battalions of the Guard came up unexpectedly from the lowland, swept the nearest batteries and unsuspecting battalions of Joseph's Brigade, with rapid fire, forcing them to retreat. Brandenstein's and Poekh's Brigades were carried along. The IV Corps retired in the direction of Sweti. The 11th Division advanced now also against Nedelist. Henriquez's Brigade, threatened in flank, withdrew, followed by the 12th Division, toward Lochenitz. The remaining three brigades of the II Corps had lost the cover of their left flank by the departure of the 4th Corps, and evacuated Nedelist and their position east thereof. The entire Corps attempted to cross the Elbe at Lochenitz and Predmeritz. The Guard advanced further near Chlum in an easterly direction and took likewise this weakly garrisoned point. Counterattacks of Benedek's Brigade from the south were repulsed by rapid fire. Rosberitz was occupied during the pursuit, as well as the Lipa woods and Lipa, under cover and with the support of the advance guard of the 2d Division of the Guard.

Almost at the same time, about 3:00 PM, the concentric attack of Canstein and Munster against Nieder-Prim and

Problus took place. It was not awaited. The enemy could not suppose that one division of the Army of the Elbe was holding out in rear of Nechanitz and that another was in the Popowitz woods. He was sure that both would soon prolong the right wing of Canstein. He was not strong enough against their attack. Two Saxon Brigades were defeated while still endeavoring to resume order. One of them was still greatly shaken by the affair at Gitschin. The VIII Corps, according to the report of its Chief of Staff, was destroyed. It was necessary to escape the threatening annihilating surrounding movement. The gradual retreat, under cover of the 3d Brigade and the artillery, was now ordered. Munster and Canstein found only rear guards.

"In close formation and in truly imposing attitude," Schwarzkoppen's Brigade emerged from the Popowitz woods. Problus was taken with the first rush. Hiller's Brigade followed south of the wood as right echelon. It found Nieder-Prim already occupied by Canstein's troops, the artillery gone and it continued against the Briza wood.

The attack of the 1st Division of the Guard from the one side, of Canstein's Division from the other, shook the entire structure of the enemy. Here and there was necessary only a little assistance to make it crumble up.

The Second Army had taken Lipa, Chlum, Nedelist, the northern part of Lochenitz, an advanced detachment had occupied Rosberitz, and the Army of the Elbe occupied Problus and Nieder-Prim, while the First Army maintained its former positions. On the Austrian side, the II and IV Corps and Benedek's and Appiano's Brigades were retreating via Sweti and Wsestar. The two other brigades of the III Corps, as well as the infantry of the X Corps, felt themselves too much threatened in their positions between Lipa and Stresetitz and also started on the retreat, with the exception of a few detachments, in the general direction of Koniggratz. Fleischhacker's Brigade of the IV Corps attempted first to escape from Cistowes north of Chlum, turned back and wanted to join the stream of the retreating troops via Langenhof near Lipa. Schimpff's Brigade of the Saxon Corps had taken the direction of Rosnitz and Briza, while Stieg-

litz's Division followed by Schulz's Brigade of the VIII Corps held the Briza wood and the two other brigades of this corps assembled at Charbusitz. To protect the retreat in the center and on the right wing fell to the share of the artillery. It continued to fire from the line: Lipa—Stresetitz, against the Holawald, thus holding back the First Army. Another artillery line had formed between Langenhof, Wsestar, Sweti, and beyond this village. It wished to halt any advance of the 1st Division of the Guard. In rear of it Sweti, Wsestar, and Rosnitz were still held by the infantry.

Benedek was occupied almost entirely and exclusively with the enemy at Sadowa during the first hours of the afternoon. He awaited an opportune moment to put into execution the great offensive blow. Archduke Ernest, Commander of the III Corps, had attempted independently to attack with one brigade the Holawald, but was repulsed. Benedek, still thinking about a repetition of the attack in greater force, only learned what was taking place on his flanks and in his rear, when Chlum had already been taken. He decided to restore the battle or, at least, to cover the retreat with his reserves, the I and VI Corps, which had advanced into the space between Rosberitz and Bor. Piret's Brigade of the I Corps was sent to Probus, Rammig was ordered to retake Rosberitz and Chlum with the VI Corps, and three brigades of the I Corps were kept in reserve.

Although 24 and then 12 more Prussian guns appeared at Chlum, the 1st Division of the Guard was in a critical situation. Its eight battalions were distributed over a large extent of terrain. About 120 guns took the villages of Rosberitz and Chlum, as well as the batteries of the Guard, under a devastating fire. Hard pressed, the few scattered battalions seemed unable to oppose any resistance to the attack of an entire corps. Nevertheless Benedek's intended attack had no prospect of enduring success. Such mass attacks had so far always failed and, should this one succeed in the beginning, it was bound to come against the numerous troops coming from the rear and break up of itself. The 2d Division of the Guard and the I Corps were expected any moment from the north, while the First Army would come

up from the west. The most effective plan would have been for the VI Corps to penetrate between Sweti and the Elbe. This would have quickly forced the Austrian reserves to retreat. The V Corps, would have to follow the VI directly. With the mass of two corps, supported on the right by the 2d Division of the Guard, it would have been possible not only to prevent the Austrians from crossing the Elbe over the bridges above Koniggratz, but also the troops could have been sent across the Elbe to invest the eastern front of the fortress. Should the army of the Elbe advance also from Ober-Prim to Charbusitz with Etzel's Division, brought up at last, toward Stosser, and the Cavalry Corps should advance to Kuklena, the retreat to Pardubitz would also have been cut off. Only a few Austrians would have escaped, the greater part would have been hemmed in, and the attack of the reserves would only have increased the disaster.

Such a result of the day was prevented by the measures taken by the Prussian army and corps commanders. The 2d Division of the Guard had turned left from the Horenoves—Maslowed—Chlum road in order to take its place between the 1st Guard and the 11th Divisions. The corps commander had sent it, however, to the other wing to fight against Fleischhacker's unfortunate Brigade which, cut off from the rest of the troops, sought only an outlet from its plight and could no longer be caught up with. The marching column of the I Corps was drawn from the right, and that of the V Corps from the left, toward the center by the army commander. They were to march straight to the "historical lindens" of Horenoves and form a strong, handsome, but entirely ineffective reserve. Only the advance guard of the I Corps had freed itself and reached the threatened Chlum from Benatek. Of five divisions condemned to inactivity, only one could have followed the road, traced by the course of events, could have advanced between Sweti and the Elbe, and could have barred the way to the stream of fugitives, at least north of the main road. The corps commander was restrained from such decisive plan by the easily explained feeling of having to assist the hard pressed Guard. The 11th Division received orders to turn to the

right, to advance against Rosberitz—Sweti, while the 12th Division was to hold Lochenitz and Predmeritz with weak forces, advancing with the rest to the right.

Thus all thought of pursuit was abandoned, the mass of the Austrian Army was allowed to continue its retreat unmolested and all available forces were employed to fight against the two reserve corps. Of these the VI Corps had advanced first. Even the narrow front of a brigade column could have executed an enveloping attack against the narrow, weakly garrisoned southern point of Rosberitz. The two to three battalions, which occupied the village, were slowly driven back to Chlum. On the southern edge of this village and near the defile leading to Nedelist and occupied by the Rifles, the attack came to a halt, then changed into a retreat. A second attack, executed by brigades of the I and detachments of the III Corps, had the same result, after the advance guard of the Prussian I Corps had reached Chlum, sent in support of the Guard. The retreating troops were threatened at Rosberitz on the one hand by the right wing of the 11th Division advancing from Nedelist, on the other by one brigade of the Cavalry Corps.

The Austrian artillery, between Lipa and Stresetitz, held out a long time. Enveloped by the Army of the Elbe, the left wing at last retreated. On the right, a few batteries held on, continuing their fire until the rapid fire from Lipa laid low first the horses, then the men. When the fire ceased, the First Army started, taking along at its head the two brigades of the Cavalry Corps which were at Sadowa. The foremost of these reached Rosberitz, when the retreating brigades of the Austrian I Corps were seeking to evade the attack of the 11th Division. The Reserve Cavalry Divisions of Prince Holstein (1st) and Coudenhove (3d) advanced to cover the hard pressed infantry. Combats ensued between this cavalry and the brigades of Hann's Division, and later, between it and the leading regiments of Alvensleben's Division<sup>(28)</sup> which were hurrying from Nechanitz to Stresetitz. Success hung in the balance, but rather favored the

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<sup>(28)</sup> The Division "Alvensleben" was assigned to the Elbe Army; the Division "Hann von Sucha" was moved to the area north of Sadowa.

stronger and more closely formed Austrians. But, even after a successful attack, they broke under the fire of the infantry advancing from Lipa, Dohalitzka, and Mokrowous. However, they gave the last retreating infantry the urgently needed time to escape from their pursuers. The long resisting artillery did not fare so well, losing part of its horses by fire and falling helplessly into the hands of the enemy. As soon as the cavalry combats had ceased, the infantry continued its advance. The VI Corps occupied the farm buildings on the main road south of Sweti, as well as Rosberitz and Briza. The Army of the Elbe had, in the meanwhile, repulsed the attack of Piret, had taken the Briza wood and occupied Stezirek with a brigade of Etzel's 18 infantry and 3 cavalry divisions. The dream of the commanders was realized. The three armies were assembled in one compact mass in the narrowest of space. They might advance now in close formation. But a hostile line confronted the Prussians on an equal front.

Map 57.

The Austrians had again placed in position their remaining, but still quite numerous artillery, with the right wing on the Koniggratz—Josefstadt road near the road to Sweti—Plotist, and the left wing in the vicinity of Stosser. This artillery apparently was resolved to oppose obstinate resistance. Yes, it might even seem that the enemy intended to execute a counterattack. For southwest of Stosser there appeared new batteries and forced, with their fire, Etzel's Brigade to retreat from Stezirek to Ober-Prim. Moltke might charge the Army of the Elbe, the commander of the Second Army might charge the V Corps and Hartmann's Cavalry Division with the pursuit, but first of all, the strong barrier, opposing all advance, would have to be broken. The First Army had found it impossible that morning to advance straight against such a line of artillery. A flanking attack, an envelopment or a turning movement, studiously avoided, would be found unavoidable. There were abundant masses for the execution of such a movement. 200,000 men assembled on one narrow little spot, offered a wonderful sight which, however, made Prince Frederick Charles exclaim: "What wouldn't I give if I could command

here and establish order!" No one could be found to undertake this Herculean work during the remaining short hours of the evening and then to lead these masses or part of them in a flank attack. On the height of Rosnitz a council took place among all who could claim to be strategists, as to what Napoleon or Gneisenau would have done. This was quite a superfluous question as neither the one nor the other of these men would have placed himself in such a situation. This much was gleaned from the pros and cons of the views: nothing more can be done today.

Map 53. This negative result was unavoidable. Moltke wanted to envelop, surround, and annihilate. For this purpose the wings should have been made strong and brought forward. The right wing of the entire army should have taken the direction of Chlumetz, Pardubitz, Holitz, the left somewhat that of Tinist across the Mettau. The essential thing was to prevent the enemy from marching to Vienna or Olmutz, i.e. in an easterly, southeasterly, or southerly direction. The commanding generals held different views: they wanted to strengthen not their wings, but their center, not send their wings, forward, but keep them away from all operations against the enemy's flank and draw them toward the center. The right wing should not go to Chlumetz, Pardubitz, Holitz against flank and rear of the enemy, but to Nechanitz against the front, the left wing should not advance to Tinist across the Mettau, but across the Elbe to the right bank. They did not think it necessary to prevent the enemy from going to Olmutz and Vienna, but wanted to drive him there. Not the eastern and southern sides of the hostile position should be reached, but it should be attacked from the west and the north. The consequent execution of these principles had assembled the three Prussian Armies into one mass and brought it directly opposite the hostile front. The ideal, which the theorists had created was attained. It was possible to break through the enemy with 200,000 men. But the enemy did not move from the spot and continued to pour his fire into them. Thus was the Austrian army saved, at the sacrifice, it is true, of 44,000 men (24 per cent) and 188 guns. A success, even a very great success had been

Map 54.

achieved, but not the success which the Prussians had already had in their hands. The army commanders had seen to that.

Benedek, however, could claim in the saving of his army a merit that should not be underestimated. It surely was not fortunate that the general accepted the battle with the Elbe in his rear, that he wished to gain the victory by a mass attack against the hostile front, and that he allowed in silence the right wing to wheel from the line: Chlum—Nedelist—Elbe, to the line: Chlum—Maslowed—Horenowes. But when misfortune seemed to befall him, he showed himself a true leader. By the attack of his reserves against Rosberitz and Chlum, the attacks of his cavalry and the placing of his artillery he surmounted the greatest evil as well as possible. He saved at least three fourths of his army. This success was then spoiled in the most unexpected way.

The troop units had become badly mixed, especially after the II and IV Corps, as well as the 2d Light Cavalry Division, attempted to cross the Elbe above Koniggratz while the 8th and the Saxon Divisions together with the remaining cavalry divisions tried to cross below the fortress. The principal stream of the fleeing troops was directed towards the fortress itself. The troops held the naïve belief that Koniggratz had been built for the purpose of assuring them an unmolested crossing of the Elbe. The Commandant on the other hand, insisted that he had to hold the fortress for his Emperor against friend and foe alike and that Austria could not perish as long as Koniggratz held out. He closed the gates. The troops found themselves in front of impregnable walls, flooded ditches and flooded fields. Wedged in a labyrinth of water courses and morasses, pressed from behind, they could proceed neither forward nor sideways. A mass of vehicles and guns was thrown into the waters, mounted men, pushed to the edge of ditches, fell in and drowned. The Commandant reported to Vienna: "Entire Corps are intermingled in and around the fortress, climbing the palisades, swimming across the ditches and the Elbe, scaling the walls of the principal enceinte, and the defense is entirely crippled. I beg for orders." Fear and confusion increased when the com-

Map 57.

pressed masses began to fire their rifles to produce the impression that the enemy was already on the opposite shore. Finally at 11:00 PM, came permission to pass through the town. The stream of men pressed through the narrow streets, crowded over the bridges, and flowed ceaselessly toward Holitz.

Map 58.

From there, Benedek telegraphed at 10:00 PM: "Catastrophe to army, apprehended day before yesterday, completely overtook it today." A catastrophe had in reality taken place, but the battle of annihilation, planned by Moltke with such promise of success, had again miscarried. A third attempt could not be made in a similar form. The Austrians were no longer in the center between three Prussian armies, advancing from different sides, but the two armies were standing facing each other. The defeated could evidently, without being greatly molested, retreat to Vienna or Olmutz. Benedek decided on the latter point. The road to Vienna was long. The army would be entirely dissolved before reaching the right bank of the Danube. In Olmutz the troops would be able, after a shorter march, to regain their strength and capacity for resistance. The capital, moreover, could be better defended from there than from behind the Danube. By taking up a flanking position on the march, the enemy would be forced to abandon all yearning after Vienna and to accommodate himself to a hopeless siege.

But this plan did not find favor with the Vienna Cabinet. Immediately upon receipt of Benedek's telegram at noon, the 1st, a decision was reached to give up the Italian possessions, to bring up the thus disengaged Army of the South and continue the war against Prussia with increased strength. In order, however, to refrain from humiliating himself as a suppliant before the vanquished of Custoza, Emperor Francis Joseph offered to cede Venice to Emperor Napoleon and demanded as compensation the extension of the armistice with Italy. Napoleon was pleased to put the recently created sister country under a new obligation by another gracious gift, but he was still more pleased to deal a blow at Prussia who was already sure of being victorious. France

had felt every success achieved by the small despised North German power as a blow directed against her own person. She saw herself threatened in her supremacy of the continent. Napoleon was now offered the opportunity of exercising the office of arbiter. He graciously accepted Venice and courteously offered to obtain an armistice not only with Italy, but also with Prussia, to hear the demands of all the parties and then to pronounce from the magisterial seat the verdict and to levy all the dues. But an armistice would serve neither Austria nor Prussia. The one wanted to regain what had been lost, the other wished to secure what had been won. Both, however, accepted the mediation. Austria did not wish, after Koniggratz, to refuse the only friendly hand stretched towards her, while Prussia did not want to make a new enemy. Both tried to delay the mediator. Prussia dared not conclude an armistice without the assent of allied Italy and without knowing of the peace conditions. Austria did not want to surrender Venice until Italy had expressed herself, but she needed to bring up the Army of the South and secure its junction with the Army of the North. The Minister President, Count Mensdorff, went to Imperial Headquarters and attempted in vain to make Benedek abandon his illusions. All he accomplished was that the X Corps was designated to be transported by rail to Vienna and four cavalry divisions were directed thither by marching. Benedek continued his road to Olmutz with seven Corps and one cavalry division.

The Army had been divided for this march as early as the 4th, into three columns, within which the scattered units gradually found their own corps. The main column (I, V, VI, and X Corps, the army reserve) was to march via Holitz, Hohenmouth, Leitomischl, Zwittau, Mahrish-Trubau, Gewitsch, and Konitz, and all to reach Olmutz on the 10th or 11th,—a right column (II, IV Corps, 2d Light Cavalry Division) via Hohenbruch, Wamberg, Wildemschwert, Landskron, Hohenstadt, Muglitz, and Littau, a left column (VIII and Saxon Corps and four cavalry divisions) from Pardubitz via Chrudim, Chrast, Politschka, Zwittau, thence one day's march in rear of the main column, via Mahrish-Tru-

bau, further on following the road of the right column via Muglitz and Littau. This program was put into execution with essential changes. The following turned aside: the X Corps at Zwittau via Brusau to Lettowitz to be transported thence by rail to Vienna; the four cavalry divisions from the line: Saar—Zwittau, to march in four columns also to Vienna via Trebitsch and Brunn.

Prussian Royal Headquarters were not quite clear on the 4th as to the magnitude of the victory gained. The enemy had retreated on the preceding afternoon to Koniggratz, but had remained immobile in front of the fortress. The battle had been stopped in uncertainty in the evening. It was quite right to suppose that the enemy would evacuate the right bank of the Elbe by the next morning, but not that he would continue the retreat on the other side. It seemed impossible to make a frontal attack on his position behind the Elbe. A turning movement, under cover of a strong protection for the left flank, must be sought above and below Pardubitz. Only when Gablenz arrived in the afternoon of the 4th, from Holitz, declaring with downcast mien that his Emperor no longer possessed an army and begging for an armistice, did Royal Headquarters begin to realize the scope of the success achieved. One enemy had for the time being, been eliminated. The Second Army was entrusted with his pursuit. The King wanted to advance against the new enemy, who could at any moment appear at Vienna, with the First Army and the Army of the Elbe. The following troops reached the Elbe on the 5th with their leading elements: the Second Army at Pardubitz, the First at Prelautsch, the Army of the Elbe at Kaldrub. From these points the Second Army was to turn toward Mahrish-Trubau, the First Army and the Army of the Elbe were to go directly towards Vienna. The latter reached the line: Brunn—Mahrish—Butwitz, on the 12th with the left wing, via Chrudim and Politschka, with the right, via Deutsch—Brod and Iglau. They had come in touch, only in small encounters, with the four retreating divisions of the Austrian cavalry.

During the first days of the march, news was received that King Victor Emmanuel had declined Venice, offered to him by Napoleon and also would not grant an armistice. Italy wanted to become free and great by her own strength, obtain the provinces belonging to her, sword in hand, and not receive ancient Italian territory as a gracious present from the hand of her protector, and maybe have to pay a shameful price even beyond Nizza and Savoy. No armistice would be granted, but the Southern Tyrol was asked for in addition to Venice, and General Cinadini was charged to cross the Po in the night of the 7th. The Austrian Army of the South was held fast and could not march to Vienna. The Capital was entirely unprotected. Only the Army of the North could be counted upon to save it. The situation was thus greatly changed. Moltke had supposed until then that Benedek would assume the offensive after a short rest and recovery in an entrenched camp. Therefore the Second Army was to advance to the line: Konitz—Littau, northwest of Olmutz. Should Benedek advance against it, it was ordered to retreat toward Glat, drawing the enemy still farther away from Vienna, possibly giving an opportunity to the First Army of attacking him in the flank and rear. Should however, the Army of the North endeavor to march to Pressburg or to Vienna, the Second Army should follow it immediately, while the First should bar its way via Lundenburg in the valley of the March, the Army of the Elbe taking upon itself security against Vienna.

At the moment when the probability of a retreat to Olmutz and the impossibility of an Austrian offensive was made clear, Moltke approved the proposition of the different army commanders to march to Prossnitz, Plumenau, and Urtshitz instead of to Littau—Konitz. He, of course, presupposed that the Second Army would try to attack and cut off the retreating enemy, driving him to the north or northeast. Nothing of the kind was in the mind of the army commander. In his judgement, the wisely selected position would keep the enemy from any retreat. Should this not be the case, it would not be expedient to attack the greatly superior Austrians "on account of complete separation from

the First Army" but as soon as the retreat of the enemy to the south had been recognized, he intended to "avoid the consequences by a junction with the First Army" and thus to give the enemy a free road to the Danube. Should however, the position at Prossnitz serve only as a means of inspiring fear, it must be reached in time. Since the enemy had had the advantage of three marches, it was advisable to take the straightest and shortest road, bringing all the corps, if possible, on one line. There were, at least, three separate roads, if the crossing of the Elbe and Pardubitz were not chosen for the entire army, but if the three corps (the VI remained for the time at Koniggratz and Josefstadt) were allowed to cross the Elbe over three separate bridges to the left bank. A right column could march from Pardubitz via Hrochow-Teynitz, Lusche, Leitomischl, Zwittau, Brusau, Lettowitz to Urtshitz, a central column from Nemtschitz via Holitz, Hohenmauth, Leitomischl (separately from the right column), Mährisch-Trubau, Gewitsch, Konitz to Prossnitz, a left column from Opatowitz via Tinist, Wildenschwert, Landskron, Muglitz to Ollschann. But the Second Army preferred, first in a column of three, and later of four corps, to take the road from Pardubitz via Hohenmauth, Leitomischl, Böhmisch-Trubau to Landskron and thence via Mährisch-Trubau, Gewitsch, and Konitz. The detour was not repaid by greater celerity. On the 12th, when the First Army and the Army of the Elbe reached Brunn—Mährisch—Budwitz, the Second Army had covered only two thirds of the distance, reaching Gewitsch with its leading elements. This march time did not correspond to the zeal shown on the opposite side.

Austria wanted to disengage the Army of the South at any cost. Napoleon did not acquiesce in her urgings that a French army and fleet would render Italy more complacent, especially by the occupation of the ceded Venetian territory. Fortunately, though energetic orders were given in Italy, they were not energetically executed, thanks it is said to French influence. The crossing of the Po by Cialdini was not very dangerous. It would be possible to hold the Italian general in check with 86,000 men, used mostly for the garri-

soning of fortresses. At least 50,000 could be brought across the Alps. Archduke Albrecht was appointed commander-in-chief of all the fighting forces. He wanted to assemble a great army near Vienna. Thither should flow together all that could be assembled at the depots, sent on the march, but, first of all, the Army of the North must be drawn to that point. As early as the 9th, on his arrival at Olmutz, Benedek received orders to send first the III Corps by rail, then the Saxon Corps. The remaining corps were now also called to Vienna. Benedek created difficulties, not being able to abandon his beloved plan of operating against the flank of the enemy, fearing also that forced marches would completely exhaust the army. An order to go to Vienna "without further objection" by rail and on foot via Pressburg, left him no choice. The Saxon Corps continued by rail. Benedek was going to start the march to Vienna with the other five corps, the 2d Cavalry Division and the reserve artillery on the 14th or 15th via Pressburg. This great opponent of Prussia was going to be joined by another.

Napoleon had suffered a defeat at Sadowa, a second through Victor Emmanuel's distant attitude. His position as the arbiter of Europe and the Chosen of the Nation had suffered a severe blow. It was absolutely necessary for him to restore his old authority should he wish to continue to hold his court in the Tuileries. Benedetti was sent as envoy to Prussian Headquarters in order to bring about, with all necessary pressure, first an armistice, then peace. That Prussia must not be permitted to grow too powerful, was the main point. Should it not be possible to strip the victor of all advantages, the increased power obtained which was his due should be compensated for by an equivalent cession of territory to France. Napoleon was neutral only in appearance. In reality he belonged already to the belligerents. He would seek, in the beginning, to reach his aim not by force of arms, but by negotiations and more or less concealed threats. The difficulty for the diplomats lay in the fact that Prussia was very willing to conclude an armistice, provided Austria meet her demands, but that this must depend upon the approval and acquiescence of united Italy, that Austria

wished to know nothing either of an armistice or of concessions, and that Italy might refuse to lay down her arms.

In order to meet this opposition, Napoleon might be forced to throw his sword into the balance. "What shall we do if France marches?" was Bismarck's question. "We must recross the Elbe," was Moltke's answer. "This must never come to pass. We must try to hold back France, meet her demands as far as possible, and, in the meanwhile, force Austria, by a new defeat, to accept our modest requests. The army, assembling at Vienna must be defeated before Benedek has time to reach it." Again a letter was sent to the Second Army on the 13th, reading as follows: "It is, consequently, your task to prevent, under all circumstances, the junction of the Austrian Armies of the North and South."

On the 13th, the Second Army stood as follows: the Cavalry Division at Konitz; of the I Corps, the advance guard at Wachtel; Buddenbrock's detachment (3 battalions, 2 squadrons, 1 battery) at Hrochow; the main body at Stephanau; the V Corps at Gewitsch; the Guard Corps at Marisch-Trubau; the VI at Landskron. On the same day the hostile troops were at the following points: the 2d Light Cavalry Division at Littau, the II Corps at Kronau, the IV at Schnobolin, the Saxon Cavalry Division at Nimlau, in rear of it the V and the not yet transported parts of the Saxon Corps at Olmutz, the VIII Corps at Neustift, the I at Prerau. On the 14th it was to march as follows: the VII Corps via Weisskirchen to the valley of the Waag, the Saxon Cavalry Division and the IV and II Corps to Kojetein and Tobitschau, the 2d Light Cavalry Division to Kronau, the field trains via Prerau, Moschtienitz and beyond along the left bank of the March. A long column would, on the morrow, move therefore along the right bank of the March from Littau via Kronau and Schnobolin to Tobitschau and Kojetein. It was the highest time for the Second Army to commence its main task, that of cutting off the Army of the North.

Before Hartmann's Cavalry Division reached Kosteletz in the morning of the 14th, extensive clouds of dust were noticed from the heights of Hrochow arising between Littau

and Olmutz and thence on the roads leading down the valley of the March. It was clear that the Austrian army was moving off. At Prossnitz, the cavalry of both sides had already clashed and, according to the inhabitants, an infantry brigade had marched in the morning through Kralitz. General Hartmann wanted to make an advance via Dub or Taubitschau in the direction of Prerau for which he requested the support of the infantry, and rode in person to the V Corps to Neustift (southeast of Konitz) in order to personally urge his demand. Steinmetz found the plan excellent, but believed that he was too far away to be able to cooperate in it. The I Corps was nearer and would surely be ready to give the necessary assistance. Hartmann obtained an order from the Crown Prince who happened to be there unexpectedly: "The I Corps will send this evening an infantry brigade with a battery to Tobitschau to occupy the crossings between Tobitschau and Traubeck." It was evening before Hartmann reached Bonin at Plumenau with these orders: "It is too late today," was the answer, "but early tomorrow a brigade will start." In the meanwhile, General von Borstel, Hartmann's second in command had started with the cavalry division to Prossnitz and sent the 1st Cuirassier Regiment to Tobitschau. This regiment encountered two outpost companies at Biskupitz and attacked them. The square formed by these companies was broken into two parts, many men being wounded. The regiment was, in the end, forced to retreat after losing 6 officers and 14 men.

In the evening, on the Austrian side the 2d Light Cavalry Division was at Kronau, the VIII Corps at Neustift (south of Olmutz), the 2d at Tobitschau, the IV at Kojetin, the I at Prerau. On the Prussian side the Cavalry Division and the detachment of Buddenbrock were at Prossnitz, the I Corps at Plumenau, the V at Neustift (southeast of Konitz), the Guard Corps at Gewitsch, the VI Corps at Marisch-Trubau. The Second Army was widely scattered, two corps were far in the rear, but the Cavalry Division, the I and V Corps were close enough to prevent at least part of the Army of the North from marching off, to drive it back, or to pursue it. In view of the order to prevent, under any circum-

stances, the junction of the Armies of the North and South, it was necessary to act efficiently, straining all efforts for this purpose. Army headquarters, however, did not deem such action necessary. The report: "The Army of the North is retreating," was translated in view of information received "the Army of the North has retreated." The task of pursuing the enemy was, consequently, finished. The still existing, likewise ordered, task of forming a junction with the First Army remained to be solved. The Guard Corps and the VI Corps were to start immediately to reach Brunn on the 17th. The V Corps was to occupy Prossnitz first, to billet behind it at Plumenau, the I Corps to take positions at Weischowitz, Urtschitz, Ottaslawitz, the advance guard at Kralitz, to cover the road to Brunn. Both corps were charged to observe the supposedly evacuated Olmutz and "should information concerning the retreat of the enemy be confirmed," were to march to Brunn to support the First Army. The junction of the two hostile armies to be prevented, "under all circumstances," is not prevented, but allowed to take place; but the junction of the First and Second Armies was to take place, be that with or without Moltke's sanction. The plan did not succeed entirely, for the supposition that "the Army of the North has marched off," was not correct and the order "one brigade of the I Corps to march to Tobitschau," had not been countermanded.

Map 60.

On the 15th, the Austrian IV and II Corps were to continue their march from Kojetein and Tobitschau west of the March, the VIII following them from Neustift, the I remaining in Prerau, while the Saxon should prepare to entrain at the latter point. Count Thun considered the march on the right bank of the March as fraught with danger, decided to take the road crowded with trains on the left bank, and started, before an order to the contrary could reach him, at 2:00 AM with the II Corps via Traubeck and Chropin to Kremsier. Thus the VIII Corps started, considerably isolated, on the flank march at 4:00 AM, in the following order: three squadrons and 150 led horses, 60 vehicles, Rothkirch's Brigade, trains and vehicles, Roth's and Kirchmayer's Brigades, the 2d Light Cavalry Division. Weber's Brigade was

also to start at 4:00 AM, and as flank detachment, cover the march of the main column via Wratek and Kralitz.

Malotki's Prussian Brigade (4th and 44th Regiments) started, after agreement, at 4:00 AM, from Stichowitz and went via Prossnitz, Kralitz, Hrubschitz, Klopotowitz in the direction of Tobitschau. The three squadrons, the led horses and the 60 vehicles had passed the town, before any contact could take place. Two companies of Rothkirch's occupied the latter, when a combat took place, between the advance guard companies on the one side and the flank detachment on the other, in the vicinity of the Wiklitzer Hof. The Fusilier battalion of the 44th Regiment, drove the enemy out of the wood northeast of the Hof and occupied it. The 44th Regiment supported at this point, deployed. Malotki's battery, as well as the two batteries of Hartmann's Division which had just arrived, went into position at Klopotowitz, and engaged Rothkirch's battery, gradually reinforced from the artillery reserve, in the vicinity of Wierowan. The march column of the Austrian infantry turned to the right fronting along the road. As soon as the 44th Regiment had deployed, the 4th Regiment followed it on the right and Malotki gave the order to advance. The hostile left flank regiment, Toscana's, attacked by an enveloping movement, retreated partly east, partly north. Lieutenant Colonel von Bredow with the 5th Cuirassiers had found a crossing, hidden from the sight of the enemy, over the Blatta above Biskupitz and attacked unexpectedly the Austrian batteries at Wierowan. Seventeen guns were taken, sixteen escaped via Rakodau, seven via Dub. Benedek, who had halted with his staff on the hill, was forced to ride off hurriedly. Rothkirch's Brigade threatened by Malotki from the south and by Bredow from the north, retreated to Littow. Detachments, which had returned to Tobitschau, were driven back by seven companies of the 4th Regiment over the Mulelenflies, the March and the Beczwa until they were received by detachments of the I Corps at Hentschelsdorf. Malotki went into position with the rest of his brigade at Wierowan. Archduke Leopold appeared opposite him with Roth's and Kirchmayer's Brigade at Dub. Wober's Brigade,

prevented from solving its problem (covering the flank) by a small hostile detachment, and the 2d Light Cavalry Division also came up. 22 battalions, 12 squadrons, and 40 guns did not attack, but allowed themselves to be held for 2½ hours by Malotki's artillery fire, until the main body of the Prussian I Corps came up via Hrubitsch and Buddenbrock arrived via Kralitz.

The retreat was now begun via Dub and Brodek, and with one Brigade to Olmutz. Malotki remained on the March. The I Corps followed as far as the Blatta. Bonin did not wish to take further part in the combat. It was left to Hartmann with the Hussars Brigade, one squadron of Uhlans, one battery and one company in wagons, to carry out the planned attack on Prerau.

To receive the Austrian VIII Corps, the I (Austrian) Corps had sent forward from Prerau the following troops: Poschacher's Brigade north of Roketnitz, one battalion of Leiningen's Brigade into that village, two battalions to Dluhonitz, one to the southeast (between the Beczwa and the railroad), one to the west of Dluhonitz, and a battalion and a battery between the two villages. This battery and the two last named battalions were attacked by Hartmann, who crossed the Beczwa at Wrbowetz and occupied the crossing with one company. He succeeded in forcing the three Austrian units to retreat. The battalions standing in and near Dluhonitz were carried along in this retreat and the trains, marching on the Roketnitz—Prerau road were thrown into hopeless confusion. Meanwhile, an attack against the battalion which was starting from Roketnitz failed. And when Poschacher's Brigade turned to the left, advanced against the few squadrons of Hussars and brought its battery into action, Hartmann sounded the assembly and retreated via Wrbowetz. Three squadrons of the Landwehr Hussars, who had remained a little behind, were charged by Austrian Hussars, forced to retreat and to deliver their booty in captives and provisions wagons. Nevertheless, the I and VIII Corps continued their retreat toward Prerau.

Map 61.

Malotki and the 5th Cuirassiers had beaten back the last intact Austrian Brigade, Rothkirch's and the appear-

ance of Bonin and Hartmann's attacks had enveloped also the VIII and I Corps in the retreat. On the same day, 15 July, the railway was destroyed at Goding by a detachment of the 8th Division. Benedek saw himself cut off from the road leading down the valley of the March and from the railway and forced to cross over bad roads through the mountains into the valley of the Waag. The VI Corps, to be followed by the Saxon Division was to continue the march from Leipnick via Weisskirchen, the I Corps and Wagner's Saxon Brigade to march via Holleschau, Wisowitz, Wlarp-Pass, and Nemsowa, the VIII Corps and the 2d Light Cavalry Division likewise via Holleschau and Wisowitz, then continuing via Boikowitz, Hrosenkau, and Kostolna, the II Corps from Kremsier via Ungarisch-Hradisch, Strany, and Neustadtl, the IV Corps and the Saxon Cavalry Division via Zdaunek, Ostra, Welka, Migawa, and Verbovce to the valley on the Waag. Benedek could still reach Vienna by a long detour via Tyrnau and Pressburg. He should of necessity have been pursued anew, thrown back, or at least forced to retreat via Komorn. This would have destroyed his army entirely and would have given the Prussians time and opportunity to overwhelm the position at Vienna on the Danube, be it ever so strong and be the river ever so wide. On receipt of the first, though premature information early in the morning of the 15th, that Benedek had marched off, Moltke had ordered the Second Army to follow up the retreating enemy with the V and I Corps in direction of Kremsier and Napagedl. The First Army was to assemble at Lundenburg to block the valley of the March to the fugitives. The pursuit would have to be directed toward Kremsier and Napagedl and not toward Prerau. Had the Cavalry Division of the I Corps taken this road early on the 15th and the V Corps had followed them, then on the 17th one division of the former could have reached Ungarisch-Brod and another one Ostra. On the same day the 8th Division was at Holitsch, the 5th at Tscheitsch. On the 18th, one division could advance to Strany, one to Welka, one to Tyrnau and one to Pressburg, the V Corps following along the valley of the March. It is hardly doubtful but that Benedek would

have been driven entirely away from Pressburg, his army entirely dispersed and the war ended.

Moltke's "incomprehensible" and "impossible" order was not transmitted by army headquarters to the lower headquarters. Instead, a proposition made by Steinmetz found approval. The evening of the 15th, Hartmann and Malotki were at Tobitschau and Wierowan, the I Corps was between Hrubschitz and Biskupitz and the V at Prossnitz. Steinmetz not acquainted with the events of the day, wanted to complete on the 16th the "advance" to Prerau, which had been planned on the 14th. He desired for this the support of one of Bonin's divisions, which he supposed to be according to the army order, at Plumenau and Urtschitz. He learned accidentally, that the I Corps was in his immediate front and found it simpler to leave the advance to Bonin. The latter was now quite ready to do what he ought to have done the day before, but decided to cook dinner first, and started at 2:00 PM, in company with Hartmann. He reached Prerau toward evening, found there provisions and oats, but no enemy. The latter had found plenty of time, since 3:00 PM to start 40,000 men on the road to Holleschau. Bonin, in order to do at least something, directed, contrary to Moltke's orders, that the railroad bridge over the Beczwa be blown up, thus making impossible the only communication with Silesia for further operations. He then returned to bivouac for the night behind the Blatta. This put out of the question all pursuit by the Second Army, and freely permitted the junction of the enemy, which was to be prevented at all cost. By order of the commanding general, the I Corps remained at Prerau and Tobitschau to observe vacant Olmutz, while the V Corps and Hartmann's Division, after a day's rest, marched down the March, and the Guard Corps and VI Corps reached Brunn on the 17th.

The day of Tobitschau must have been felt in Vienna as a day of painful failure. Only the III and X Corps were assembled at the capital; one Saxon Brigade and four cavalry divisions would arrive, it is true, in a very short time, but the 50,000 men expected from Italy could not be there before the 22d. Even with their support no successful resis-

tance could be offered behind the Danube and in the Florisdorf fortifications, and still less could an attack be delivered. It was absolutely necessary to draw in the Army of the North. The nearest route, through the valley of the March, was barred. The detour via the valley of the Waag to Pressburg, demanded considerable time. The delay would be increased should this detour via Pressburg be barred and a longer one via Komorn be rendered necessary. The pass at Blumenau, leading from the valley of the March to Pressburg, was occupied by Mondel's Brigade of the X Corps. That brigade could not resist a determined attack. The II the nearest corps of the long column marching through the valley of the Waag, was ordered to reinforce it. By means of wagons and a horse tramway the corps was to hurry as fast as possible to the threatened point.

Prussian headquarters had evolved a different picture. It was not known how many corps had reached Vienna by rail from Olmutz. It appeared certain, however, that the larger part of the Army of the South had already arrived. The strength was estimated at 150,000 men ready to take the offensive. Their attack from the Florisdorf fortifications might be made simultaneously with an attack of the Army of the North from Pressburg as soon as the latter had reached that point. It is, consequently, most important to occupy Pressburg. The two hostile armies could be separated there. And from there it would be possible to attack the right flank of the Army of the South marching behind the Danube, as well as the left flank of the Army of the North marching down the valley of the Waag. In order that the piercing might succeed, the Army of the South must be attacked behind the Danube and in the Florisdorf entrenchments, whereas the Army of the North must be attacked in the valley of the Waag. For the former problem would be available the Army of the Elbe, and that part of the First Army which was not used against Pressburg. For the latter were destined the I and V Corps as well as Hartmann's Division, as Moltke's order gave them the direction to Kremsier and Napagedl early on the 15th. The Second Army had disdained to take up this problem and eliminated itself from

the operations. The I Corps was brought to rest in front of the empty Olmutz, the V Corps and Hartmann's Division marched to the left, the Guard Corps and the VI to the right of the March for several days behind the First Army. For the many problems; i.e., attack against the Danube front, the occupation of Pressburg, driving Benedek back, the flank attack on the left bank of the Danube, only the First Army and the Army of the Elbe were available. The Guard Corps and the VI Corps, at least, must be awaited before thinking of fighting a decisive battle. In order to prepare for the latter, the direction from Brunn, via Goding and Holitsch, down the March to Pressburg was given to the left wing of the First Army, and the direction from Znaim, via Laa and Wilmersdorf, to Vienna, was given to the right wing of the Army of the Elbe.

Map 62.

On the 21st, The Army of the Elbe stood near Gaunersdorf, the advance guard at Wolkersdorf, a flank detachment, two squadrons under the Prince of Hesse, at Stockerau; of the First Army, the II and III Corps as well as Alvensleben's Cavalry Division (1st) was behind the Weiden-Bach, to the left as far as Angern, and in the rear as far as Spanberg, Hann's Cavalry Division (2d) at Marchegg, the 7th<sup>(24)</sup> and 8th Divisions under Fransecky at Stampfen and Marienthal. The Second Army was with the VI Corps (11th Division) at Wilfersdorf, the Guard Corps at Drosing, the V Corps far back in the vicinity of Strassnitz and Wesely, Hartmann's Cavalry Division as far as Skalitz.

On the Austrian side, there stood at the same time one brigade of the III Corps at Krems, two at Tuln, the X Corps and one brigade of the V, arrived from Italy on the 19th, in the fortifications of Florisdorf, the three other brigades of the latter corps in Vienna, the IX Corps, also arrived from Italy the day before, at Schwechat, one Saxon Brigade at Modling. The 1st Light Cavalry Division was divided between the III and X Corps. The three Reserve Cavalry Divisions observed the Danube between Hainburg and Schwechat. Henriquez's Brigade had already joined Mondel's

<sup>(24)</sup> It had exchanged with the 2d Division.

Brigade of the X Corps at Blumenau, and the three remaining brigades of the II Corps were expected in the morning. The IV Corps held at Nadas and Migawa, the mountain passes leading from the valley of the March to the Tyrnau and Verbovce roads. In the latter village was the 2d Cavalry Division and in the rear of it the head of the long Benedek Column, at Neustadtl. All these troops were some three to four days' march distant from Pressburg; they are as little to be considered for the next few days as the troops behind the Danube. They were too weak for an attack against the Prussians behind the Weiden-Bach or the Russbach, yet strong enough to repulse an attack against the Florisdorf works or to prevent the crossing of the Danube. For the 22d there was only the question whether or not Count Thun with 24 battalions, 11 squadrons, and 40 guns could hold the pass of Blumenau against Fransecky's 19 battalions, 24 squadrons, 78 guns. Everything was risked on one card. Should it come out well, the junction of the Armies of the South and North would be assured. If it came out badly, Austria was probably lost. Fransecky would receive reinforcements the following day. Benedek would then, even if he were not pursued, decide on a retreat via Komorn and the position on the Danube could be attacked from the front and from Pressburg. Austria could not afford to have that happen. She showed herself inclined to accede to the urgings of France and to accept an armistice of 5 days beginning at noon on the 22d. Prussia also "was willing to make this sacrifice of five days, disadvantageous from a military point of view to please Napoleon." The forenoon hours of the 22d were not sufficient to finish a combat begun by Fransecky with much circumspection and well conducted. At the appointed hour the combat had to be interrupted and the troops had to retreat to the assigned line of demarkation. The junction of the two Austrian armies was thus secured and Prussia placed in an unfavorable military situation. Both Austria and France wanted to utilize the success obtained, each in her own way.

Negotiations opened on that day at Nikolsburg. Austria being already outside of the German Confederation

concurrent in the formation of a North German and South German Confederation. Bismarck's principal demand was thus fulfilled. The King, however, insisted on the cession of territory beyond Schleswig-Holstein. The ancient demands of Frederick the Great, Austrian Silesia and part of Bohemia, moreover the losses suffered during the Napoleonic years of bitterness—the unreturned Ansbach, Bayreuth and Eastern Friesland—were demanded by him as a right, as was also part of Saxony. These demands were met by a positive refusal from Vienna. Neither Austrian nor Saxon territory should be ceded. Better by far to go under with honor than to cede one foot of territory. The King, on the other hand, would rather abdicate than return to his people without the provinces rightfully belonging to him. These could consist, besides Schleswig-Holstein, only of Hanover, Hesse, and Nassau, the implacable enemies of the North German Confederation.

Napoleon had other interests to guard than had Austria. The terrifying ghost, frightening France and the other Great Powers for centuries, was a United Germany. It was of not much importance who should be the head of this centralized power. It was equally dangerous to Europe if it were threatened by a Great Germany with 70,000,000 inhabitants under the Emperor of Austria or, without Austria, under the King of Prussia. Since the German attempts of unification by the inventor of the principle of nationality could no longer be entirely crushed, a North German Confederation seemed the lesser evil. With a South German Confederation, supported by France, perhaps with an independent German State on the Rhine, it would be possible to create a rival for the enlarged Prussian. Which of the German Kings and Princes within the North German Confederation would become the vassals of Prussia, was of no importance. Thus all parties concerned, seemed to agree to a North German Confederation under the leadership of Prussia and to the elimination of Hanover, the Electorate of Hesse and of Nassau from among the independent states. It was necessary for Prussia to come to a conclusion on this basis before any other powers could mix in, and to accept other secondary demands, such as the integrity of Saxony

and the war indemnity to be paid by Austria. France was anxious to bring the affair to a close before Prussia, becoming arrogant through a new victory, should cease to limit her demands. Austria wanted an interruption of hostilities to gain time. None of the three wanted lengthy negotiations, but a quick result in order to accept or reject the demands, to end the war or to continue it. Shortly before the expiration of the armistice, there lacked for the conclusion of the agreement only the acquiescence of the Vienna Cabinet.

The greatest delay was resorted to for the fulfillment of this formality. The armistice had done what had been expected. During the period of five days Benedek had crossed the Danube at Pressburg with his army and the II and IV Corps had followed him. Masses of reserves had arrived. An army of 276,000 men and 840 guns, as large as the world had ever seen, was assembled behind the Danube. It stood in a very inaccessible position from which it could proceed to the right or left, according to its will, against the compressed mass of 218,000 Prussians. The victor of Custoza, who had solved the difficult problem of defeating with a small army a vastly superior one, would be able to solve the smaller problem of defeating one of numerical inferiority. A council of war was held at the Hofburg. The spirits were high as was natural after the naval victory of Lissa, which had taken place a few days ago. Lieutenant Fieldmarshal John, Archduke Albrecht's Chief of Staff, explained briefly the advantages of the situation, but arrived at the conclusion that these advantages could no longer be utilized. On 1 July, the Army of the North, was according to Benedek's judgement, immediately on the eve of its dissolution; according to Gablenz's opinion, it scarcely existed on the 4th. Since then it had been driven to Olmutz, into the valley of the March, across the Carpathians, into the valley of the Waag, through Pressburg and across the Danube to Vienna. What it had escaped in the pursuit, it had suffered from the haste of the leaders. This army was at an end. The troops were entirely exhausted, discouraged, unnerved and unavailable for an attack. The warlike hero, drawing his sword for the wielding of a mighty blow, found

that his weapon was broken. Roland's mare is the finest in the world, but she is dead. In addition to this convincing reason to desist from the continuation of the war, it was hardly necessary to point out that Hungary was awaiting a new defeat to proclaim a revolution and that the Italians were advancing, while the South Germans were retreating. The peace preliminaries between Austria and Prussia should be completed. The document was ready for signature. Benedetti then made the agreement of France to the territorial acquisitions of Prussia dependent upon a compensation, hinting at the left bank of the Rhine. Bismarck interrupted him with the words: "Do not make any official communications of this kind to me today." The document was signed. Benedetti disappeared. He will come back at a more opportune moment.

Twice could a Cannæ have taken place. The idea of a complete surrounding and annihilation of the enemy was too foreign to the Prussian generals to allow Moltke's simple and grand plan to succeed. The enemy was only pushed back. It is true that he was entirely broken. But should he find some rest, he could regain strength, as was hoped, draw in reinforcements and regain capability of resistance, even of attack. The longed for rest should not have been given him. The Second Army should have pursued him. During a long period of peace nothing much was heard of pursuits. It was known, from many maneuvers, that the beaten enemy was, after a lost battle, as fresh, enterprising and dangerous as 24 hours earlier. The Austrian army must have lost almost one third of its effective strength during the series of encounters and battles. Nevertheless it was materially stronger than the Second Army and was led by a general who was considered as the personification of the idea of the offensive and to whose love of enterprise and resolution anything could be ascribed. It was, consequently, comprehensible that the Second Army, imbued with ideas prevalent in peace time, followed only cautiously an enemy who could, at any moment, face it and mete out punishment to it. As far as Olmutz it might have been possible to maintain the fiction that the Austrians retreated to lure the ene-

my on so as to separate him and then to defeat the separated parts. But when Benedek, after scarcely one day of rest in the great fortress, continued hurriedly on the march, no plans of attack could be ascribed to him. He had no other thought than to escape to Pressburg or Vienna. The head of the Second Army was closer to these points than the mass of the Austrians. A situation, similar to that of Jena, was established. Moltke ordered by telegraph, quite in a Napoleonic mind, that pursuit be undertaken in the decisive direction. However, 60 years had sufficed to obliterate all but the names of Jena and Prenzlau, while the sense escaped the memories. Moltke's order was simply not understood and could not be executed because it was not understood. It was due only to the initiative of one general that success was achieved with a handful of troops, a success which the entire army dared not attempt to achieve. Under such circumstance no battle of annihilation or annihilating pursuit could be thought of. It had to be left to the enemy to gradually exhaust himself. Other generals also had to contend with the lack of understanding, training, and decision of their subordinates. They tried to eliminate these defects by the infallibility of their authority and the decision of their orders. Moltke, being no commander-in-chief, but only the Chief of the General Staff, lacked the necessary authority and was not vested with the right to speak with the assurance of a man in command. He had to content himself with polite advice, pleasant expostulations, suggestions and similar means, and only rarely could he avert the grossest mistakes by a Royal "I order." The power of his thought was sufficiently great to achieve, if not the highest, yet great things nevertheless.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Campaign of 1870-71

#### FROM THE CONCENTRATION OF THE ARMIES TO THE RETREAT OF THE FRENCH ACROSS THE MOSELLE

Instead of taking home the left bank of the Rhine and Belgium from the campaign of Sadowa, Napoleon III had lost a goodly portion of his power and prestige. In order to obtain better results, the Emperor had expressed more or less hidden threats, but he dared not utilize the army which was afflicted with all the defects caused by years of neglect. Should he, however, desire to maintain his throne and France at the head of the European States, a complete unification of Germany must be prevented and Prussia must be forced back within the boundaries becoming to her. A war was, consequently, unavoidable and, in order to wage it, it was necessary to win allies and to reorganize the army from its very foundation, yes, even to create it anew. Zealous negotiations took place with Prussia's foes and friends of the later years. The infantry was armed with a rifle superior to the Prussian arm. All other plans of reform and improvement were still in their inception, when attempts to bring a political defeat to the opponent, brought on the war.

Persuaded that "he would be numerically inferior with 300,000 men," Napoleon thought "to offset the lack of numbers by the rapidity of movements." This sounded strangely from a man who was often compelled to utter immobility by fits of illness and for an army which was only to be formed and which had to be equipped with the most necessary things. Only the plan of campaign seemed to be ready.

Map 63. The Rhine was to be crossed at Maxau and above, the South Germans were to rally around the ancient Rhine Con-

federation standard and march jointly with the French against Berlin, while the Austrians, further to the right, took the same objective, the Italians following in the wake of the greater nations and the Danes, supported by a French landing corps, invaded Hanover.

However, before the French Army could begin crossing the Rhine, it had to be assembled on the left bank. This could be effected, on account of the then existing railway net, only in two groups, one of two corps in Alsace and one of five corps in Lorraine. One corps was to be formed at Chalons in order to follow as a left echelon in the general advance. Of all the suppositions, on which the plan of campaign was based, none was realized. The South Germans decided not for the Rhine Confederation, but for the German flag. They assembled, as did the North Germans, on the Rhine between Coblenz and Karlsruhe. The French plan of campaign was thus greatly simplified. No crossing of the Rhine would be necessary. The enemy would be found already on the French side. The allied powers would not advance alone on the other side of the stream: the great coalition, which had not yet been concluded was already broken. Germany and France alone stood opposite each other.

With the knowledge of being superior to the opponent in organization, mobilization, railway transportation, and consequently in rapidity of concentration, the Germans intended to attack before the French could be assembled. The First Army (VII and VIII Corps) was to assemble on the Moselle at Wittlich, the III and X Corps of the Second Army on the railroad on the left bank of the Rhine from Bingen to Neunkirchen, the Guard Corps and the IV Corps by Mannheim to Homburg, the six corps after that to advance by Merzig-Saargemund, seek the as yet unprepared foe and beat him. A reserve army of which the XII and half of the IX Corps assembled north of Mayence, the other half of the IX Corps at Worms, was to follow the Second Army at a few marches interval. The Third Army (V and XI, Bavarian I and II Corps, Wurtemberg and Baden contingents) were to emerge from the Palatinate and drive the enemy, assembling in Alsace, in a southerly direction and

then, turning to the right, support the attack of the First and Second Armies.

This plan had to be abandoned. The French had already commenced before the declaration of war, the transportation of troops on peace footing and thus assembled in a few days in Lorraine a fighting strength which might become dangerous, not to the First or Third Armies, but to the Corps of the Second Army which were to detrain at Neunkirchen by battalions. It was found advisable to transfer the intended detraining at Neunkirchen to Bingen and Mannheim. Time was lost in this manner, but strength was gained. The two Corps of the Reserve Army (the XII and IX) were detrained at Mayence and Worms, almost opposite the corps of the Second Army at Bingen and Mannheim, thus being able to advance with those on one line. There was hope even that the corps, so far transported only to Berlin (I and II) might be brought early enough, after the freeing of the line of transportation of Bingen and Mannheim, to join the general advance. The two corps did not have to be awaited by the Second Army in the bend of the Rhine south of Mayence. They could have been brought in complete safety by stages, during the advance of the rest of the army, as far as Neunkirchen and Homburg. Then there would have been not six but ten corps available for the attack across the Saar. The front Merzig—Saargemund could be strengthened by one corps and be prolonged to the right as far as Sierck and to the left as far as Finstingen.

After the surprise and sudden attack against the French, who were believed to be hastily concentrating, was found to be impossible, it seemed advisable to try and attain victory by the straining of all forces even if that should be at the cost of a few days' delay. The problem, given the First and Second Armies remained the same as had been given in the beginning—to find the enemy and to defeat him. Its execution was facilitated by the greater number of corps and a broader front.

The Third Army joined the Second on the left. It was brought to the strength of six corps through the addition of the VI Corps, transported as far as Gorlitz where it had to await the departure of the V Corps. The right

wing joined, via Primasens and Wolmunster, the left wing of the Second Army and sent detachments to Bitsch. Another corps went across the mountains with its right division by Sturzelbronn and Philippsburg to Neuweiler and Zabern, with the left by Ober-Steinbach, Jagerthal, and Neiderbronn to Ingweiler and Buchsweiler. Two corps crossed the Lauter between the mountains and the Hagenau forest, two others advancing south of this forest. In order to obtain a separate road for Werder's Corps, assembled at Karlsruhe (Wurttemberg and Baden Contingent) an attempt would be made to build a bridge across the Rhine between Rastatt and Selz or further upstream. In this way, the problems, entrusted to the Third Army, to drive southward the enemy reported to be assembled at Bitsch and in Lower Alsace, and to support the Second Army by an attack from the east, would be easiest of execution.

The entire German army would thus advance by all available roads between the Moselle and the Rhine, seeking the enemy. It was known about the latter, that the left group had advanced from Metz and had occupied with its advance guard (II Corps, Frossard) the heights south of Saarbrucken and the town itself, the main body (Bazaine, III Corps) standing between Saargemund and St. Avold, the reserve (Guard) advancing by the Metz road as far as the German Nied; the IV Corps (Ladmirault), divided into divisions and brigades, covered the left flank as far as Sierck, the V Corps (Faily) the right flank between Saargemund and Bitsch. The Alsatian group had been divided and assigned to the I Corps (MacMahon) and VII (Douay) along the Rhine from Belfort to Hagenau and north of the latter. One division of the latter corps was still at Lyons. Both groups, however, were in constant movement. Each day could evolve a new situation. Only four corps could be considered as sure—with their main forces between Saarbrucken and Metz, one corps in the vicinity of Bitsch, one in Upper Alsace; one, which could be reinforced at any moment by the two preceding ones, was being concentrated in Lower Alsace.

If now the German line, extending from Perl to Rastatt, was to seek the enemy, the wings of the armies finding nothing or little in front of them, were to make a turn

inward. Thus they would need more time than the centers which saw the enemy directly in front of them. It was, consequently, advisable to have the wings cross the frontier earlier than the centers. On a given date, for example, on the 9th of August<sup>(25)</sup>, the right wing of the First Army could come from Perl to south of Diedenhofen, the left wing of the Second Army and the right of the Third Army as far as Saaralben, Ormingen, Rahlingen, and Klein Rederchingen, the left wing of the latter army to Sufflengeim and close to Bischweiler. Thus attacks were of themselves being prepared against the hostile flanks. It was true that the German wings were threatened, in their turn, on the right by Diedenhofen and Metz, on the left by Strassburg. These fortresses were, however, so weakly garrisoned that they could exert only a negligible effect on the outside and be nothing more serious than inconvenient obstacles. Much more serious would have been the movement of the army reserve (VI Corps, Canrobert) from Chalons to Nancy or Metz. One part of the turning right wing would have been occupied by it and its flank attack greatly weakened.

The question was as to what would be the decision reached at French Imperial headquarters when, in the evening of 9 August, a mass of contradictory reports and information were brought in. The decision to retreat immediately was not to be considered. For twenty days already the press had written and the crowd in Paris had shouted: "On to Berlin!" Should a retreat take place as soon as the enemy showed himself at a distance and before a shot was fired, the Emperor would lose his throne, the marshals and generals their posts, and the army its glory. Moreover, a retreat toward Metz would have brought about a battle under unfavorable conditions, one to Nancy would have exposed the scattered divisions and brigades of the IV Corps as well as those of the II to considerable defeats. It could thus be taken as probable that the reinforced II Corps had gone into a position near Kadenbroon, long since reconnoitered and well known (south of Saarbrücken and west of Saargemund) and that the flanks had been covered

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<sup>(25)</sup> The 9th of August had been designated as the date for the First and Second Armies to cross the Saar.

by the remaining troops. MacMahon, who was fully prepared for an attack from the east in an equally excellent position near Worth, would probably have acted similarly. Though a defeat was not exactly improbable, yet the battle had to be accepted as it had been accepted by Hohenlohe at Jena, Bennigsen at Friedland, and Benedek at Koniggratz. On 10 August, the Germans would have continued their march along the entire line, the right wing of the First Army east of Metz, the left of the Second Army above Saar, the right of the Third to Zabern, its left to Buchsweiler and Hochfelden. Many columns would meet with opposition, with some very obstinate resistance, by the enemy in more or less good positions. But the columns, meeting no enemy, could not be held back on this account. They could not more efficiently support the neighboring corps, whether attacking or attacked, than by continuing their march on the roads assigned them in order to fall against the flank or the rear of the enemy in case this were needed. However the results of the fighting in Lorraine might be pictured, in the evening of 10 August, the wing corps of the German First and Second Armies would have reached on the right the vicinity of Metz, on the left west of Finstingen and then the French, however great their success or defeats might have been, would have to retreat for the purpose of escaping the threatening turning movement, the Germans starting immediately in pursuit, reaching on the right Nomeny and Delme, and on the left, Dieuze, Maizieres, and Roxingen. In order, however, to close the ring entirely, the 3d, 5th, and 6th Divisions were attached to the First Army; the Guard and the 12th Cavalry Division to the Second, which, hurrying ahead of the right and left wings, in order to block the crossings over the Seille between Marsal and Lanfroicourt or those over the Meurthe and the Rhine—Marne Canal between Nancy and Einville, would have brought to a standstill the entire retreating mass and forced it to accept a new battle from the Germans, pressing upon them from all sides<sup>(26)</sup>.

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<sup>(26)</sup>In 1870, the cavalry was so poorly equipped and armed that the problem entrusted to it could be only incompletely solved by it. After the number of batteries had been increased, machine guns introduced and the rank and file armed with carbines, the cavalry divisions were better able to fulfill more effectively the demands made on them.

MacMahon, too, would go back after having been attacked first from the east then from the north via Langensulzbach, Reichshofen, and Niederbronn. He might think to find an escape in a southerly direction, but would find himself threatened on the one side by the columns coming from the mountains, on the other side by those emerging from Hagenau and the south, and find his road blockaded by the 1st, 2d, and 4th Cavalry Divisions advancing from Ingweiler and Hagenau and the Bavarian Cavalry brigades on the Moder or on the Zorn and the Rhine—Marne canal.

The V Corps, even if it were not drawn in toward the I, would find it difficult to escape being surrounded.

How far the French armies and corps could have been surrounded and annihilated need not be discussed. The greatness of the success depended on purposeful and indefatigable pursuit by the German armies and corps. But, even should many enemies escape annihilation, what might then remain of the French army would, nevertheless, not be available for any great deeds. The French field army might be considered as set aside. Only Paris and the other fortresses would then remain for the Germans to deal with.

Such a result was practically placed in the hands of the Germans by Moltke's original instruction to seek and beat the enemy on the line: Merzig—Saargemund. The execution of the plan was opposed by the ideas of the army commanders in regard to assembling the forces, massing the troops before battle, and keeping back unusually strong reserves. Benedek's measures in regard to the march from Moravia to Bohemia in 1866, have been severely criticised. As if it had to be so and could not be otherwise, the Second Army marched again in the Benedek march formation—four corps (the IV, Guard, IX<sup>(27)</sup>, and XII) along the main road via Kaiserslautern to Homburg, two corps (the III and X) from Gingen by another road to Neunkirchen, although there were plenty of good roads on the right and left. From Neunkirchen, the III Corps was to continue via Sulzbach, the X from Bexbach via St. Ingbert to Saarbrücken, the Guard Corps from Homburg via Blieskastel

Map 65.

<sup>(27)</sup> The IX Corps took advantage of the permission to use the main road only for one Brigade. It marched with the main forces along a parallel road more to the north.

to Blittersdorf, the IV via Zweilbrücken and Hornbach to Saargemünd, the IX and XII, following the IV and the Guard Corps. But this was not enough, however. Through misunderstood interpretation of orders from Royal Headquarters and independent ideas, the First Army started the VIII Corps from Ottweiler via Fischbach, the VII from Lebach to Saarbrücken. Thus four corps in the first line and two in the second, took this one town as their objective, while another corps was sent to the deeply cut line of the Saar, St. Arnual—Saargemünd, so difficult to cross, and still another was directed against the latter town, which was easily defended. Should the plan be executed in this manner, six to seven army corps would be assembled on the narrowest strip in front of the Kadenbronn position and the enemy, after the departure of the troops necessary for the defense of the position and of Saargemünd, would have had sufficient forces left to attack the west flank of the crowded German troops, left open between the Saar and Kadenbronn. As a matter of fact, such attack by the French was as improbable as was a great and decisive victory on the part of the Germans. As at Sadowa, not much more could be expected here than the confronting of two unwieldy masses.

The Third Army followed the same principles as the First and Second. For the protection of Alsace, MacMahon had selected a position near Worth, facing east. It secured for him, as he deemed, communications with the main army, and threatened in flank an advance of the Germans against Strassburg. The latter would be compelled to attack the strong position, for the defense of which the V and VII Corps could also be drawn in. In order to bar the principal crossing of the boundary stream (the Lauter), a detachment was sent to Lauterburg, Douay's Division (8 battalions) to Weissenburg, and covering detachments to Klimbach, Lembach, and Sulz.

The German Third Army had received orders from Royal Headquarters to cross the frontier on 4 August, to drive MacMahon back in a southerly direction, and to advance across the Vosges Mountains toward the upper Saar, somewhere between Saaralben and Finstigen. It should reach this point in time to cooperate with the Second Army

on the 9th, in an attack on the French main army along the line: Saarbrücken—Finstigen. The events of 3 July, 1866, were to be repeated. The mass of the Second Army would have stood waiting opposite the hostile position until the Third Army should bring deliverance and victory. Whether it would be successful in inducing the First Army to adopt the role of the Army of the Elbe and make an attack on the hostile left flank, appeared very doubtful, in view of General von Steinmetz's independent character. Moreover, on account of the great distance of the Lauter from the Saar, and of all the obstacles to be encountered on this road, the smooth execution of the plan was in no way assured. This was apparent as early as 4 August.

Map 66.

On that day the Bavarian II Corps was to reach Weissenberg from Bergzabern, the V Corps St. Remy and Wooghausen via Kapsweiler, the XI Corps the Blenwaldziegelhütte via Schaidt, and Werder's Corps Lauterberg, while the Bavarian I Corps followed as a reserve. The objectives of the marches were reached by the three corps without much difficulty. Only the Bavarian II Corps found at Weissenberg an obsolete, but well preserved and garrisoned fortress with high walls and deep moats, and behind it Douay's Division in a strong position on the heights with excellent obstacles in front. Fortress and position were not easily to be overcome without strong artillery. Called up by the cannon thunder, the V Corps came hurrying up on the left, and the XI on the right of the Lauter. The former crossed the river at Altenstadt. Under the joint attack of the three corps in front and flank, the enemy evacuated the position, after a bloody resistance and disappeared from the sight of the victors along the road to Klimbach. The quick and effective cooperation of the V and XI Corps in the battle of Weissenburg gave brilliant testimony as to the spirit of the leaders and troops. But had the Third Army, for the purpose of overcoming of all resistance and opposing real or phantom march columns, endeavored to assemble three corps, it would have attained small success and suffered relatively great losses, but would never have reached the Saar in good time. As shown by the war of 1866, each marching column of an advancing army should undertake, by itself alone, to take charge of

each enemy it may meet. The neighboring columns should continue past the enemy in order to attack him in the flank and rear should this be necessary.

After the three corps had taken the direction of Weissenburg, the Bavarian I Corps marched also to that point. On 5 August of the four assembled corps, the Bavarian II Corps marched via Klimbach to Lembach, the 9th Division via Kleeburg, Drachenbronn, and Lobsann to Preuschdorf, the 10th Division and the XI Corps proceeded partly by marching and partly by rail to Sulz, followed by the Bavarian I Corps to Ingolsheim; Werder's Corps was brought to Aschbach, and the 4th Cavalry Division was to proceed along the highroad to Hagenau. At Sulz, the point where the roads to the west and south intersect, stood the two divisions of the XI Corps, on the left and right one corps each at Lembach and Aschbach, and one in reserve at Ingolsheim; the V Corps was sent forward as advance guard to the west; the 4th Cavalry Division reconnoitered in a southerly direction.

The Cavalry found in that direction only a weak enemy, while near Worth beyond the Sauer the enemy was found in a strong position. On 6 August, a turning movement to the right was to be made, the Bavarian I Corps advancing to Lampersloch and Lobsann, the V Corps to Preuschdorf, the XI to Holschloch, and on the 7th the three Corps were to attack the front of the enemy almost 5 km in extent. The right flank was to be covered by the Bavarian II Corps at Lembach and Wingen, the left by Werder's Corps at Reimersweiler, the rear by the 4th Cavalry Division at Hunspach. These orders did not book the driving of the enemy to the south and an advance through the mountains in order to reach the Saar on the 8th and to take part on the 9th in a concentric attack of the entire German army against the French main army. By an attack against the strong hostile front, with flanks well protected, hardly anything better was to be accomplished than the driving beyond the mountains against the Saar, a difficult pursuit, and a tardy arrival at the great battle. But even the most modest victory was not assured. MacMahon had for several days been given the disposition of not only of the VII Corps (Douay) but also of the V

Map 67.

(Faily). Should he have the will and should he so decide, he could have drawn up both these corps in good time to attack the hostile flanks. An advance of Faily by the main road via Stutzelbronn to Lembach and of Douay via Hagenau to Surburg would not of course, have sufficed. At each of these points, in the mountains and in the woods, it would have sufficed to hold back the enemy, with one division, which would make two divisions and three cavalry divisions available for a turning attack against Weisenburg and Nieder-Rodern. In fact, MacMahon had considered an attack on the flanks, at least with the V Corps. He lacked, however, confidence of success and the decision necessary for its execution. By indefinite orders, only one division of the VII Corps was brought up prior to the battle on the 6th, and one division of the V Corps during its continuance. These small forces were not used for attack, but were employed as covers for the flank and as reserves. On the French side also, great importance was given to the security of the flanks. On the 6th the two armies were to face each other in two squares. Neither of the two opponents seemed to think that the best security for his own flanks was an attack against those of the enemy.

Map 68.

The development of the Third Army, as planned, was not executed. The German outposts were already too close to the hostile ones, the zeal of the troops and of the subaltern commanders to go into combat was too great: the battle developed of itself. It was soon found that an attack against the strong front, be it with two divisions or three corps, would bring no decisive success. The narrow front of the French and the zeal of the Germans brought about of itself the attack against the front and of both flanks, to which MacMahon seemed to have exposed himself on purpose. A still greater success might have been achieved had the advance been made in the very start by many columns across the mountains and over the plain north and south of the Hagenau woods.

Map 69.

Map 70.

The First and Second Armies were also brought out of their difficult situation through the initiative of their subaltern commanders and the zeal of the troops. While on 6 August, the 13th Division of the VII Corps was to turn, via Volklingen to Forbach as a right flank guard, the

14th Division was to advance on the Lembach road only as far as Guichenbach, but had continued its march to Saarbrücken and beyond it and concluded from the movements of Frossard's Corps on the Spichern heights that the enemy was about to retire. In order to hold him, the Division Commander, General von Kameke, decided to attack the strong position. The very insufficient forces were reinforced by the leading troops of the next corps, especially by the 16th and 5th Divisions. The troops succeeded, by their impetuous courage, in taking the edge of the position and advancing also on the Forbach road as far as Stieringen-Wendel. This success of the Germans would probably have induced Frossard to retire at least as far as Kadenbronn. The report, however, that the enemy had attacked Forbach<sup>(28)</sup>, settled the matter. The retreat was started in the night to Saargemund.

The French army was as good as dispersed by the victories of Worth and Spichern. MacMahon went with five divisions (four of the I and one of the VII Corps) via Zabern to Saarburg. One division of the VII Corps at Mulhausen thought itself threatened in rear by the detachment of the Württemberger, Colonel von Seubert, reported to be in South Baden, and retreated, almost in flight to Belfort, where the 3d Division of the Corps of Lyons had also gone. Faily who had gone first to place himself under the protection of the guns of Lutzelstein, later joined MacMahon at Saarburg. On the 7th, two divisions of the III Corps joined Frossard at Püttlingen. The two other divisions of that corps were at St. Avold; in rear of them was the Guard at Lubeln, the IV Corps at Bolchen, Helsdorf, and Busendorf. All these scattered units had to be assembled and this seemed possible only at Chalons, and no longer behind the Moselle. Corresponding orders were already sent on the 7th to the corps, insofar as they could be reached. According to these, the II, III, and IV and the Guard Corps were to assemble at Metz and thence march jointly to Chalons, MacMahon and Faily via Nancy, Douay (VII Corps) by rail to the same point. Because of false

Map 71.

<sup>(28)</sup> It was the 13th Division which the Commanding General of the VII Corps, von Zastrow, had sent via Volklungen as flank guard

information, MacMahon believed that the road to Nancy was already blocked by the enemy and turned southward, Faily still farther southward and both reached Chalons, as well as Douay, with the help of the railway, between the 17th and 21st of August, in dissolution and demoralization, scarcely fit for service.

Only an immediate pursuit on the 6th and 7th of August could have increased the confusion and dissolution. A pursuit was attempted by the Third Army. After the enemy had disappeared from the battlefield of Worth, the 4th Cavalry Division was brought from its distant position in reserve and, since it was not known where the enemy had gone, it was sent on a false track. Nevertheless the division reached the French rear guard at Zabern on the 7th. The enemy had, in the meanwhile, come so far to his senses and had so much artillery on hand as not to allow a cavalry attack to throw him into the mountain passes. The pursuit in Alsace had thus come to an end. The Third Army followed the defeated enemy slowly and reached the Saar, not on the 8th, but on the 12th, between Saarunion and Saarburg.

The left wing of the Second Army advanced on the 7th and 8th between Bitsch and Saargemund, between the Saar and the mountains. As a matter of course, no enemy could any longer be seen. The naive hope, awakened by false information, that MacMahon would direct his retreat via Bitsch and could be thus cut off, was entirely disillusioned.

A pursuit from the battlefield of Spichern seemed simple and easy. The troops, which had fought on the 6th, were, however, quite exhausted by combats and marches and badly mixed up. The masses, more in rear had to be disentangled and brought more to the front before they could again become fit for service. At least two days of uninterrupted work were necessary to extricate the troops from the dangerous defile and much more time would be required to place the trains, which were in hopeless confusion, on the roads they had to take. Fortunately the enemy was too widely scattered. He needed time to assemble and had not yet gained any appreciable start when pursuit on the part of the Germans could be taken up.

THE ADVANCE OF THE GERMANS TO AND ACROSS  
THE MOSELLE

## THE BATTLES OF COLOMBEY-NOUILLY AND MARS LA TOUR

After the battle of Spichern, the I Corps on the right wing of the First Army reached on 7 August, Lebach, one day's march from Rehlingen, and the IV Corps on the left wing of the Second Army reached Lorenzen, a few kilometers east of Saarunion on the 8th. Rehlingen and Saarunion were thus the extreme flank points on the line of the Saar, between which the ten corps of the 1st and 2d Armies could be brought and formed by evening of the 9th, in order to start from there, according to Moltke's orders, "To seek the enemy and defeat him!" This enemy did not fall back to Saarbrücken as had been supposed on the German side in the beginning. There he would have been cut off. He did not go, as had been advised on the French side, to the plateau between Toul and Nancy, surrounded by the Moselle and Meurthe rivers. He would have been surrounded there. He took, as reported by the cavalry, the natural line of retreat via Metz, Verdun, and Chalons. If the 300,000 Germans advanced from the Saar with a somewhat held back center on Metz, with somewhat advanced wings on Bertrangen (south of Diedenhofen) and Dieulouard, they might count on driving the 144,000 French beyond the Moselle and into Metz. But what would have to be done after the river had been reached on about the 13th, depended on the attitude of the enemy. Should the French army march in several columns through Metz and right and left past Metz towards the Meuse, not much harm could be done to it. The pursuit would have to be continued as heretofore.

Map 72.

Every army on the retreat, which does not feel strong enough to face the enemy, is attracted involuntarily by a fortress in which it hopes to find rest and safety after the dangers and fatigue which it has undergone. Should the French army take the longed for rest and security in Metz only until the heads of the hostile columns appeared on the Moselle, the only road which would remain open for the continuation of the retreat would be that to Verdun,

covered directly by Metz, and it would have been impossible to save the 120 km. long column<sup>(29)</sup> of 164,000 men, at which the French army was estimated, being surrounded by the German right wing, turning to the left on the other side of the Moselle, by the left wing, turning to the right, and by the cavalry, hurrying ahead to bar the road.

But an advance of the Germans across the Moselle on both sides of Metz could not be executed at the time. Army headquarters, which had placed on the march to the Saar four corps one behind the other on the same road and had drawn six corps into a front of a few kilometers, would not have been moved by any directions in the world to take with the ten corps as many roads on the other side of the river and a narrow front of 40 to 50 kilometers. They wanted to march in a much deeper and closer formation, but, most of all, not to be separated by Metz, not give the slightest possibility to the concentrated enemy of attacking the separated armies with united forces. Moltke was forced at the time to make allowances for such ideas and desist from his simple "seek the enemy and beat him" though the surrounding and annihilation of the enemy had to come sooner or later through the numerical superiority of the German troops. Since the turning of both wings seemed too risky, Moltke had to be satisfied with the turning of one wing—the right. The enemy was not to be surrounded on the Moselle by an attack from both sides, but was to be driven to the north towards the frontiers of Belgium and Luxemburg.

Map 73.

The Second Army was to reach the left bank of the Moselle in three columns (the III, IX, and II Corps, via St. Avold, Falkenberg, and Nomeny; the X and XII, via Saargemund, Gross-Tannchen, and Delme; the Guard and IV<sup>(30)</sup>, via Saarbrücken and Morchingen), while the First Army in two columns (I Corps via Kurzel and Pange, VII and VIII, via Lubeln and Remilly) was to cover the march of the

<sup>(29)</sup> The strength of the army was given by the French as 174,000 after the arrival of Canrobert. Since one division remained in Metz, the troops, led by Bazaine out of Metz on 14 August, might amount to 164,000 men.

<sup>(30)</sup> Since the Third Army was still far behind, the IV Corps had taken advantage of the crossing at Saarunion, assigned to it just then, and took thence a separate road, via Chateau-Salins.

Second Army against Metz, the Third Army following with its right wing via Saarunion in echelons. 450,000 men were getting ready to envelop 150,000. These 150,000 men might throw back the weak flank guard of 90,000 men (First Army), but would meet in their further advance, the Second Army and possibly, also the Third Army. The danger of a hostile attack was, consequently, not imminent, that of a hostile retreat would be greater. The success of the plan depended on the untarrying advance march of the Second Army and the longest possible stay of the enemy at Metz.

Such a stay was in no way among Napoleon's calculations. Very soon after the defeats of Worth and Spichern, he had decided on a retreat to Chalons, where he could hope to assemble all his available forces and be equal to the enemy who would have to considerably weaken his strength for the investment of fortresses and for covering his communications.

The Empress-Regent had, however, asked her husband to obey the will of the people and not give up Metz, the bulwark of the eastern frontier. Canrobert's Corps was sent thither by rail as a reinforcement. Should he have to hold Metz, Napoleon wanted to hazard a battle on the French Nied with the fortress as a point of support in his rear.

The First Army, which on the 10th, reached with the I Corps Kreuzwald, with the VII Kalingen, with the VIII Lauterbach, had to advance against this position. It might be justified in not pressing forward at once, but remaining stationary on the 11th to await the arrival of the Second Army for a joint attack. But that the latter on the 10th, four whole days after Spichern, was still on the Saar and did not take advantage of the enemy's halt to make a great advance and reached, on the 11th, with the III Corps Falkenberg to be sure, but with the remaining corps of the first line only Hellimer, Geblingen, and Harskirchen, and with the IX and XII only Forbach and Saargemund, was in no way justified.

This army headquarters now believed that the march to the Moselle had lost its importance. Since the enemy had occupied a strong position, it entertained not so much

defensive as offensive intentions, i.e., the intention of attacking an enemy of almost twice its strength. Such an attack would always have been fraught with the greatest difficulties. With the exception of the fabled feats of antiquity, of colonial wars, of Hohenlohe and Ruchel at Jena, who had adopted as an immutable principle, "always be the first to attack," only Frederick the Great had risked attacks against a twofold stronger enemy and that not always with success. And now, an old, sick man, a dilettante in generalship, with an already shaken army was to undertake a risk, which after even a possible initial success, would lead him to utter annihilation. If Moltke saw in the taking up of the position by the enemy, only a temporary holding of it, as might be comprehensible, were his opponent not too pressing, the voice of Prince Frederick Charles, who had emerged from two campaigns a general crowned with glory, whose excellent plan of attack against the position on the Saar was crossed only by Steinmetz and who, out of ten corps commanded seven, ought not to remain unheeded.

The Prince, however, awaited or hoped for an attack and desired to prove in a brilliant manner the correctness of the principle "strategically offensive, tactically defensive." While preparing for battle, the III Corps was to seek a "defensive position," near Elkenberg, the First Army to advance with the I and VII Corps on the 12th to the German Nied between Bolchen and Mohringen, the VIII Corps to follow as far as Niederwiese and Buschborn, the IX to follow the III to Hubeln, the II to go to St. Avold. Army headquarters thought to make a turning movement to the right with the remaining corps to the line: Falkenberg—Verny, by the evening of the 15th, "straining all its forces." On the 16th, the patiently expectant Napoleon could make an attack against the Bolchen—Falkenberg position and be annihilated by a flank attack from the line: Falkenberg—Verny.

Unfortunately Napoleon knew nothing of the plans concocted against him. Otherwise he might have assembled his army behind the Seille, attacked the German left flank

at Verny and rolled up the beautiful flank position<sup>(31)</sup>, while the Germans were still awaiting at the front the desperate attacks of a resurrected Ney and the Old Guard. Without an inkling of the heroic role, assigned him, Napoleon desisted from the defensive battle as soon as the heads of the hostile troops were seen in the distance and went on the 12th to a new position in the rear, with its right near Magny resting against the Seille and reaching the Moselle via Peltre and Colombey as far as Chieuvilles.

The marches of the Germans on the 11th and 12th had been in vain. In vain were the troops of the right wing assembled over bad roads under a pouring rain, concentrated in a narrow space without shelter or provisions, suffering a lack of everything. These hardships, however, disappeared and paled before the fact that the enveloping marches of the Second Army, from which the final success was expected, had been stopped. Only the X Corps had advanced one division at least to Delme. All the remaining corps were still far behind. On the 13th the march toward the Moselle was resumed. The III Corps advanced on the main road to Pont-a-Mousson as far as Buchy, the IX as far as Herlingen, but on the 14th, the former halted with its head at Louvigny, the latter at Luppy and allowed the XII Corps to come as far as Solgne to the south. It was not so easy to abandon the hope of a hostile offensive; it was apparently believed that the enemy had retreated under the guns of Metz only in order to obtain a better run before his spring forward. Such a spring would now, it was believed, be made in a southerly direction along the road to Chateau-Salins. It would then strike at the crossroads: Saarbrücken—Pont-a-Mousson the strongly posted III, IX, and XII Corps, which could be supported in the rear and on the sides by the II, IV, and Guard Corps, while the First Army of which the I and VII Corps had crossed the German Nied on the 13th, and the VIII had reached that stream, was to undertake Blücher's problem at Waterloo. The roles should be reversed if the enemy chose the road from Metz to Saarbrücken for his attack.

Map 75.

<sup>(31)</sup> Foerster "Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia. Memorable events of his life." II, 136.

The expectation of a hostile attack did not seem quite unjustifiable. The German cavalry, which had reached the Moselle, on the 12th with its patrols, reported that along the river on the Frouard—Metz railroad there were long trains with small intervals between them supposed to contain troops of Canrobert's Corps. It was not possible to think that the army reserve, the nucleus, around which the army was to be organized at Chalons, had been brought to Metz only to be shut up with the Army of the Rhine in the fortress or, hardly detrained, would have to start the difficult retreat to Chalons, from where it had just arrived in all haste. These transports must have a special meaning. The intention of an offensive became possible; the enemy reinforced himself, while the Germans weakened themselves. Should the right wing column of the Second Army continue to march on Pont-a-Mousson, the First Army would be gradually isolated and Napoleon could easily arrive at the idea of utilizing the empty space between the Moselle and the Nied for an attack with his 174,000 men against the unprotected right wing of the First Army.

Map 76.

The turning movement of the Second Army could not be arrested, but the right wing column could have been given another direction. As soon as the defective system of roads south of Metz permitted, the III Corps should have turned off from the main road and moved in the direction of Champey or Arry and the IX toward Corny, in order to secure as many crossings over the Moselle as possible. To these could be added almost immediately the VII Corps on the road to Pange; the VIII advancing via Kurzel and Teunschen; the I, via Ste. Barbe and Vry; the 1st and 3d Cavalry Divisions, marching along the Moselle. There would then have been five corps on hand to break Napoleon's offensive no matter with how many corps it might be undertaken, or to halt the enemy as soon as he made a move to retreat further. In other words: while the Second Army was turning the right wing of the enemy, the First Army should attempt to hold him in front, supported in this operation by the right wing of the Second Army. Had this plan of operations been adopted, since

the First Army had been freed from covering the flank south of Metz and had been directed against the hostile front, i.e., since the 10th, the Second Army might have reached the Moselle on the 13th and have come into contact with the enemy in the position: Magny—Chieulles.

Long ago, at the time when the Germans were still preparing for the great battle on the Nied, Napoleon was thinking of resuming the retreat to Chalons, in spite of the Empress-Regent, the Ministry, Parliament, and public opinion. Uhlans had been seen at Pont-a-Mousson and Dieulouard which seemed to proclaim: the entire hostile army will soon cross the Moselle and to remain will mean to be surrounded. The execution of the retreat, found necessary, would cause a storm of wrath in Paris which it was urgently necessary to avoid. Therefore, the Emperor relinquished the command, transferring it to Bazaine on the evening of the 12th, with directions to start the retreat immediately. This was a very wise measure. The Emperor could feel absolutely in unison with his people, after laying down his command, and it was to be expected that Bazaine's appointment would meet with the approval of the editorial rooms of the boulevard newspapers. This however, did not remove all difficulties.

If the new commander-in-chief executed the command of his Sovereign and brought the army safely to Verdun, across the Meuse and to Chalons, he would fall under universal condemnation, would be branded as a traitor and ruined forever. For he would have left, faint-heartedly, the bulwark of the east in the lurch. A similar fate awaited him if he dreaded the difficulties of the retreat, remained in Metz, and were there surrounded. For then he would have criminally neglected to unite his army with that of MacMahon into one unconquerable host. Bazaine could count only on extenuating circumstances if, after a glorious resistance, he should be forced by the numerical superiority of the enemy, to retire to Verdun or Metz. To allow himself to be invested in Metz without a battle would appear as shameful as to flee across the Meuse to Chalons. A battle was unavoidable. Bazaine needed not to worry lest it take place as soon as he started on the march to Verdun.

On the 6th, the Germans had already fought a battle south of the Saar. Between Diedenhofen and Fouard, this river is only 40 to 80 km. from the Moselle. Within seven days this space should have been crossed. At least the heads of the hostile columns must have reached the Moselle and would cross the river on the following day. The German army stood, consequently, on the Moselle above Metz, the French at Metz, mostly on the right bank. The latter might retreat by one road or be distributed over two to three roads, the columns would nevertheless be too long not to be overtaken. It was doubtful whether they would succeed in passing by the pursuer, forming front near Verdun, repulsing the closely following enemy, and gaining the necessary time for the crossing of the Meuse. It was much more probable that an encounter would take place half way between the two fortresses and that the French would be either encircled by the overpowering numerical superiority or driven north toward the frontiers of Luxemburg or Belgium. Bazaine would then be wholly a traitor, and not he alone would be ruined, but France with him. The difficulties were great; they increased because the Marshal knew not how he could contrive the march from Metz to Verdun of 164,000 men with the horses, guns, and vehicles belonging to them. He could also not comprehend how to lead an attack with such an army, or how he should accept the battle should one be offered. In contrast with the difficulties of a retreat to Verdun, the commanding St. Quentin (32) enticed him to stay at Metz. Bazaine trusted that he could best oppose a victorious resistance to a superior enemy in a strong position, resting against the fortress. Should the enemy be repulsed, there would be time to take the offensive or to march to Chalons. Bazaine had to come to a decision, but at the end of each road he might take was posted the death warrant of the traitor. He was awakened from endless doubts and somber brooding by the report "Pont-a-Mousson is occupied by 100,000 men (19th Division)." The enemy was, consequently, on the point of crossing the Moselle.

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<sup>(32)</sup> Mountain 4 km. west of Metz with a fort of the same name.

That much was now certain. The French army could not remain on the right bank of the Moselle. Under all circumstances, it was necessary to cross over to the left bank to the plateau between Mars la Tour and Gravelotte. Circumstances would show, once there, if it were possible to attack the isolated hostile columns and throw them into the Moselle, if the assembled army should continue the march to Verdun or lastly, if, resting against Metz, the attack of the enemy should be awaited. The morning of the 14th was designated for the start.

Bazaine could consider unmolested how to effect the march to the left flank. A numerous staff was, it is true, at his disposal. Yet all the mistakes, committed so far, were ascribed to him personally. By his march orders, he had brought only confusion and evil. If the Marshal knew but little about the editing of march orders, still he thought that he could do it better than the strategic assistants detailed to help him.

The good advice, which was then withheld from him, was given to him later in profusion. Five roads: via Mars la Tour and Fresnes, via Conflans and Etain, via Briey, via Fentsch, and via Diedenhofen were open to him in order to disappear rapidly with his five corps. This would have been a flight, which would have brought him eternal shame and opprobrium, scattered his army to the four winds, exposed it to separate defeats and brought it to Chalons in small units, only increasing the confusion at that point.

With such advice, Bazaine was not served, since he considered a battle unavoidable and for this battle he wanted his entire army united. He decided to use for the present only the two southernmost roads via Mars la Tour and via Conflans, the one with three and the other with two corps. Unfortunately both roads formed but a single one as far as Gravelotte. All five corps with their trains and all belonging to them, had to be started over this one road in one monstrous column. The impossibility of executing this was soon apparent. In this perplexity, there was discovered another narrow, steep deeply cut road, which could be used only to a very limited extent, leading via Plappeville—Lessy—Chatel St. Germain—Malmaison and opening into the road to Conflans. After long seeking, it was

even found that it was possible to turn from the main road Woippy—Briey at St. Privat or Ananweiler toward Doncourt. With the use of these three roads, the French Army could have been assembled during the course of the 15th, though with the sacrifice of part of the trains, between Mars La Tour, Doncourt, and Gravelotte, for the purpose of attacking, retreating, or defending itself. But on that very 15th, the Second Army, which had to reach the Moselle on the 13th, was to be expected south of the Gravelotte—Mars la Tour road. A battle must be fought at the latest, on the 16th, the First Army being able to take part in it effectively from the Moselle below Metz. However, neither the one nor the other party appeared in time at the rendezvous. The Second Army did not come because it reached the Moselle not on the 13th, but on the 15th. The French Army did not appear because it was held back on the right bank of the Moselle.

Map 77.

General von der Goltz had advanced with the 26th Infantry Brigade ahead of the VII Corps to Laquenexy. When he received the report of the Cavalry at noon that the French were on the point of evacuating the position: Magny—Chieuvilles, and of retreating across the Moselle, he realized the necessity of detaining the enemy as long as possible to give the delayed Second Army time to come up. Not a moment was to be lost, as the II Corps, forming the right, as well as the IV Corps, forming the left flank of the French position, had already disappeared, the one south of Fort Queuleu beyond the Seille, the other across the island of Chambiere beyond the Moselle, while the center, the III Corps, as well as the Guard Corps must have already begun the march through the city had the crowding of the streets with vehicles not blocked their way. After having reported to his division commander and informed Headquarters of the I Corps, General von der Goltz started at 3:30 PM with seven battalions, three squadrons, and two batteries on the march against the center of the hostile position at Colombey. Vallieres Creek was crossed, the village taken by the advance guard. Further advance, however, was checked by strong hostile forces deployed on the opposite plateau. The III French Corps had faced to the

front at the advance of the German Brigade, Castagny's Division (2d) had returned at a run to their old entrenchments at Colombey. On the left, Aumard's Division (4th) extended as far as the Vallieres Creek between Vantouz and Nouilly; on the right Metman's Division (3d); the right flank was later covered by Montaudon's Division (1st), north of Grigy facing southwest. The Guard Corps took up position west of Borny. Bazaine allowed this movement to be completed, but ordered that it be limited to defense, that no advance whatever should be made, and that the troops should withdraw as soon as it were possible.

Naturally, General von der Goltz's Brigade could not do much against the great superiority. Only gradually, hour by hour, did reinforcements come by all roads, Falkenstein's Brigade (2d), of the I Corps from Maizery via Montoy, Memerty's half-brigade (3d), from Retonfey via Noisseville, lengthening the front from La Planchette to Lauvalliere and thence to Nouilly. The 25th Brigade came via Coincy for the immediate reinforcement of von der Goltz's Brigade so that the entire 13th Division, supported by the corps artillery, occupied the space between La Planchette and Colombey, while the 28th Brigade took part in the combat south of this point, the 27th south of Coincy in reserve, and only late in the evening the advance guard of the 18th Division came up from Orny via Mercy le Haut to Grigy. This deployment, lasting several hours, was not awaited by the troops that had already arrived. Every newly arriving reinforcement gave rise to a new attack, to ever more energetic advance. The French were thus pushed back in the center as far as Borny, on the wings as far as Grigy and Bellecroix. It was impossible for the Germans to advance further. Their left wing was in the immediate vicinity of Fort Queuleu which was prevented from sweeping the front of the VII Army Corps with its guns only by the advent of darkness and by its own troops.

In the meanwhile, another combat developed more to the north. General Ladmirault, on hearing the thunder of the guns, took the IV Corps back across the Moselle, leaving one division near Fort St. Julien and occupied his former position with two others, the position reaching from the

Vallieres Creek via Mey to Villiers l'Orme. To the troops of the I Corps south of the valley of Nouilly, forming the right wing of the Prussian battle line, it seemed inevitable that the overlapping French front between Mey and Villiers l'Orme would advance, turning to the right, cross over the strip between Nouilly—Servigny, crush the right Prussian wing, and roll up the entire battle line engaged in a hot combat. There was not sufficient infantry on the spot as yet to meet the threatening attack. The protection of the flank had to be entrusted to the artillery which had hurried up. A few batteries were placed at Poix and Servigny, the greater number on the heights on each side of Noisseville, and orders were given to Memerty's Brigade, which had just come up, to hold the ground at Nouilly at all cost. Later on the 4th Brigade, brought from Tennschen, was sent to Servigny, the 1st as far as Noisseville and the batteries taken from Poix to the heights of Failly. All these measures taken to escape a threatened surrounding movement proved unnecessary. General Ladmirault had not recrossed the Moselle to attack the enemy or wreak evil upon him. He wanted only to occupy his old position at Mey—Villiers l'Orme and to hold it for the purpose of protecting the as yet unfinished Fort St. Julien and to prevent the enemy from gaining the high right bank of the Moselle whence he could get a glimpse of the camp of the greater part of the French army between Metz and Woippy. Since the 4th and 1st Brigades of the Prussian I Corps arrived too late in the evening to undertake an attack against the French IV Corps, the combat of the two opposed north wings would have been limited to an artillery duel, if ever renewed attacks by a few companies against Mey, the key of Ladmirault's strong position, had not been made, and repulsed, as might well have been expected. The French felt elated by such cheap successes, although they withdrew in the dark, and though these feelings were hardly shared by the soldiers. Troops, obliged to retreat exhausted after a bloody battle, feel not victorious, but defeated. The courage of the Corps, which as yet was fresh, was not heightened by the battle, but depressed. The troops went forward to new encounters without confidence of victory.